

ИСТОРИЯ ВОИН

ИСТОРИЯ · ДОКУМЕНТЫ · ФАКТЫ · ДОКАЗАТЕЛЬСТВА

# СОВЕТСКО-ПОЛЬСКИЕ ВОЙНЫ

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## Abstract

The book is devoted to the study of complex Soviet-Polish relations in 1918-1939, which began and ended with undeclared wars, the initiative of which came first from Warsaw and then from Moscow. In the second half of the 20th century, in Soviet historiography, these events were studied taking into account the political situation, and all the most complex topics were mentioned in passing, or even simply hushed up. Today there is an opportunity to take an unbiased look at Soviet-Polish relations in their dynamics.

After 1917, Poland and the Soviet Union found themselves adversaries in the struggle for influence in Eastern Europe. You will learn about how the Soviet-Polish war of 1919-1920 began, why the Red Army failed to take Warsaw, how the Riga Treaty of 1921 was concluded and implemented, and about the Soviet-Polish rivalry during the 1930s. The author focuses on the beginning of the Second World War - the events of September 1939. The archive documents now available have made it possible to describe in detail the Polish campaign of the Red Army in 1939.

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## Introduction

*For a long time these tribes have been at enmity  
with each other; More than  
once bowed under a  
thunderstorm That theirs, then our side. Who can resist in an  
unequal  
dispute: Puffy Lyakh or faithful*

**Ross? A. S. Pushkin. To the Slanderers of Russia, 1831.** Eastern Europe is divided by an invisible border corresponding to the January isotherm, which runs through the Baltics, Western Belarus and Ukraine to the Black Sea. To the east of this line, frosty, dry winters prevail, to the west - wet and warm. Accordingly, the , and climatic conditions in these regions are completely different. It is no coincidence that this air line became the border between two civilizations - "the West" and "Russia", which entered the historical arena, respectively, in the 8th and 14th centuries.' In cultural terms, a clear indicator of different civilizations was the Catholic and Orthodox faiths of Christianity. Like any other biosphere formation, each civilization strives to expand its habitat. Of course, this unconscious desire is refracted in the minds of people and receives one or another rational (or irrational) explanation. At that distant time, as a rule, it was about various religious justifications for this external

expansion.

Expanding its habitat, "Western" civilization to the XIII century. swept all of Central and Northern Europe, in the East there was a conquest of Finland and the Baltic states, in the South-East - the crusades continued, which were supposed to lead to the subjugation of Byzantium and the possession of the Eastern Mediterranean. On the Iberian Peninsula, there was a Reconquista - its conquest from the Arabs. In the Northwest, there was a long struggle for the subjugation of Ireland.

The formation of the "Russian" civilization in the XIII-XIV centuries took place in a difficult political situation. The disintegration of the former Kievan Rus into specific principalities and their further fragmentation, along with a decrease in the activity of the huge masses of the local population, threatened Eastern Europe with the subjugation of its western neighbor. But at that moment the Mongols came, and the political map changed dramatically: the Golden Horde, the great power of its time, arose in the Eastern European steppe. And the Russians had a choice. As you know, North-Eastern Rus' agreed to an alliance with the Horde, which, according to the tradition of that time, was framed as a vassalage, and South-Western Rus' was torn to Europe.

At the same time, the rise of the history of the Principality of Lithuania began, which managed not only to repel the onslaught of the Crusaders, but also to subjugate the central and southern lands of the former Kievan Rus - the Dnieper and the interfluvium of the Pripyat and the Western Dvina (future Belarus). A new state arose, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which became not only a kind of buffer between the emerging Russia and the West, but also the arena of a fierce struggle between the two Christian churches - Catholic and Orthodox.

**As** a result, in 1386, the Kreva Union of Lithuania and Poland led to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Lithuanian nobility made a choice in favor of Catholicism, and the bulk of the population retained traditional Orthodoxy and gradually took shape in two new ethnic groups - Belarusians and Little Russians, who lived in the Polish-Lithuanian state. Thus, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania turned out to be a part of Western civilization - its eastern outpost. Meanwhile, in the North-East of Rus', on the

basis of a mixture of Slavs, Finno-Ugric peoples and Tatars, a new people was formed - the Great Russians (Russians), who created their own socio-political system, built on the basis of the denial of the principle of specific power - a centralized state with a center in Moscow. The formal acquisition of independence in 1480 allowed Russia to raise the issue of returning the lands that belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and were inhabited by Orthodox Christians. This, in turn, determined the general vector of relations between Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian state for centuries to come. In 1492-1494, 1500-1503, 1507-1509, 1512-1522. wars were fought, as a result of which Russia regained Smolensk, Chernigov and Novgorod-Seversk lands. In the future, until 1562, the armistice agreement was repeatedly extended. In the XVI century. Russia began to subjugate its eastern neighbors, recreating in a new way in the center of Eurasia the unity lost by the collapse of the Mongol

Empire. On the western borders, an attempt was made to gain access to the Baltic Sea and resolve the Crimean issue. All this led to a conflict with the Polish-Lithuanian state, which itself had certain views of both the Baltic states and the Crimea. IN

As a result, in the Livonian War, Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian state (since 1569 the Commonwealth) became rivals. At this time, the Commonwealth was on the rise, and Russia had to give in. As a result, on January 15, 1582, peace was concluded in the Yama Zapolsky, according to which Livonia and Courland went to the Commonwealth, and Russia transferred to it small territories north of Polotsk.

The crisis that began in Russia at the end of the 16th century was used by the Commonwealth to strengthen its influence in the East. From supporting False Dmitry in 1609, the Commonwealth switched to an open war with Russia, covered by the fact that Prince Vladislav was invited to the Russian throne by the Council of Seven Boyars in Moscow. Only the consolidation of Russian society, which finally found a basis for compromise, made it possible in the 10s of the 17th century. complete the Troubles and fight off the western neighbors. However, under the terms of the Deulinsky truce, concluded on December 1, 1618 for 14 and a half years, the Commonwealth received Smolensk and Chernihiv lands. Having recovered from the Troubles, Russia in 1632-1634. tried to return Smolensk, but was defeated. True, according to the Treaty of Polyanovsky of June 4, 1634, the Polish side renounced its claims to the Moscow throne.

However, the Commonwealth itself experienced in the 17th century. hard time. It, like the entire Western civilization, was affected by the Reformation, which gave rise to an unprecedented religious intolerance, which later acquired a social coloring. In the Commonwealth, where many Orthodox lived, it was they who became the object of this intolerance. It is clear that ethnic, religious and social differences had to manifest themselves brightly sooner or later, which happened. Already at the end of the XVI century. uprisings repeatedly broke out on the Russian outskirts of the Commonwealth, but in 1647 the national liberation struggle of Russian Ukrainians began under the leadership of B. Khmelnytsky. The general situation in which Ukraine found itself, sandwiched between the Commonwealth and Crimea, predetermined the appeal to Moscow for help. On January 8, 1654, the Pereyaslav Rada decided on the confederation of Ukraine with Russia - a new Russian-Polish war of 1654-1667 began. As a result, the parties agreed to a compromise, and according to the Andrusovo truce on January 30, 1667, Russia returned Smolensk, Seversk land, Left-Bank Ukraine and Kyiv. On May 6, 1686, the "Eternal Peace" was concluded, which confirmed the new border and the transfer of Zaporozhye to Russia.

At the end of the XVII-XVIII centuries. The Commonwealth became a weak state and served as a buffer protecting Russia from the West. As is known, a significant part of the events of the Northern War of 1700-1721. took place precisely on the territory of the allied Russia of the Commonwealth. Although the Polish king August II was an ally of Russia in the Northern War, this did not prevent the Polish elite from laying claim to Courland and Livonia themselves, refusing to guarantee Russian conquests and from recognizing the imperial title of the Russian monarch. Naturally, for Russia it was important who would become the successor of Augustus II. The main task of Russian diplomacy was to preserve the Commonwealth and block any attempts to strengthen royal power - a weak neighbor is always preferable to a strong one. In the struggle

for the Polish throne, S. Leshchinsky, a protege of France and Sweden, and August III, a protege of Russia and Austria, clashed. In 1733-1735. Russia took an active part in the War of the Polish Succession, during which she managed to protect the Commonwealth from the influence of France. As a result, with the help of the Russian army, Augustus III was strengthened on the Polish throne, who was forced to renounce claims to Livonia and preserve the traditional structure of the Commonwealth. The idea of dividing the Commonwealth, expressed at the same time by Austria, Prussia and Sweden, was not supported by Russia. In the future, the Russian Empire preferred to exert behind-the-scenes influence on its western neighbor. Only in the 70s of the XVIII century. this policy has been changed. Meanwhile,

the Russian Empire managed to gain recognition for itself as a great European power. If the Northern War became a kind of Russian application for this status, then following the results of the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763. he was finally assigned to her. After the death of

August III, with Russian financial assistance, S. Poniatowski was elevated to the Polish throne - Catherine 11 needed a calm and obedient western neighbor for the war with the Ottoman Empire for access to the Black Sea. In 1768, Russia achieved that in the Commonwealth, non-Catholics were equalized in rights with Catholics, but this did not pacify the country. The bar confederation organized a struggle against the Orthodox population, which also took up arms. In the conditions of the Russian-Turkish war of 1768-1774. the bar confederates actually acted on the side of the Turks. Only in 1772 they were defeated near Krakow. Tied by the war with Turkey, Russia was faced with a choice: either give in to blackmail from the Prussian king, who offered to share

The Commonwealth, or be attacked by France and Austria. On August 5, 1772, Prussia, Austria and Russia signed an agreement on the division of the Commonwealth. Prussia received Gdansk Pomerania and Greater Poland (36,000 sq. km and 580,000 people), Austria - Malopolyu (83,000 sq. km and 2,650,000 people).



people), and Russia - the territory along the eastern banks of the Western Dvina and the Dnieper with the cities of Polotsk, Mogilev and Vitebsk (92 thousand sq. km and 1,300 thousand people). The influence of Russia in the Commonwealth was preserved. In the conditions of the war of revolutionary France with Prussia and Austria, Russia tried to prevent the reformation of the Commonwealth, and on January 23, 1793, Russia and Prussia signed a second treaty on the division of the Commonwealth. Prussia received Gdansk, Torun and part of Greater Poland (58 thousand sq. km), and Russia - Belarus and Right-Bank Ukraine (250 thousand sq. km). These events, as well as the revolution in France, stirred up part of the Polish elite, and in 1794 an uprising broke out in the Commonwealth led by T. Kosciuszko, which was crushed by Russian troops.

October 24, 1795 Russia, Austria and Prussia signed an agreement on the final division of the Commonwealth. Russia received Western Belorussia, Lithuania and Courland (120,000 sq. km), Austria - Western Ukraine and Krakow (47,000 sq. km), and Prussia - Central Poland with Warsaw (48,000 sq. km). Thus, Russia finally returned the territories occupied by Lithuania and Poland in the XIII-XIV centuries. Now the border of civilizations almost completely coincided with the political borders in Eastern Europe.

However, the solution of the Polish problem did not end there. During the Napoleonic Wars in 1807, the Duchy of

Warsaw was restored, which became an ally of France. It is clear that Russia took these actions of Napoleon with distrust, but so far, being forced to conclude an alliance treaty with France, put up with the situation. As Russian-French relations deteriorated, Russia tried to create a new anti-French alliance with Prussia, Austria and Poland, but nothing came of it, and during the war of 1812 the Duchy of Warsaw, driven by revanchist intentions as well, became an enemy of Russia. As a result of the defeat of Napoleon and the new redistribution of Europe at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815, most of Central Poland was transferred under the rule of the Russian Empire as an autonomous kingdom of the Polish territory of the "Western" civilization, and not just border areas, as was the case in the Baltic states and Finland. Thus ended **the first attempt** in the struggle for dominance in Eastern Europe between Russia<sup>2</sup>. That is, Russia for the first time received a part and the Polish-Lithuanian state. However, as you know, nothing is eternal, and after the First World War, in the conditions of a new

redivision of Europe, Poland was reborn, and the general chaos in Eastern Europe again raised the question of who would dominate the region. This book is devoted to consideration of this **second attempt** in the struggle for influence in Eastern Europe. It examines in detail the main stages of Soviet-Polish relations in 1918-1939, from the point of view of the struggle of the parties for the status of a "great power".

In itself, a new struggle for influence in the region was quite natural. Like any other states, Poland and the Soviet Union tried to expand their zone of influence. Unfortunately, this aspiration of the Soviet Union has never been recognized in Russian historiography, and as a result, a rather original picture has developed. If all other states in their international policy were guided by their own interests, then the Soviet Union was engaged only in demonstrating its peacefulness and fighting for peace. In principle, of course, it was admitted that the USSR also had its own interests, but usually they were spoken about so vaguely that it was almost impossible to understand the motives of Soviet foreign policy.

However, the rejection of such an ideological approach makes Soviet foreign policy as understandable as the policy of any other country. Consideration of the international situation within the framework of the historical and political analysis of the development of systems of international relations shows that the Soviet leadership in the early 1920s, faced with a difficult but rather traditional problem. During the years of the revolution and the Civil War, the Soviet Union lost the positions won by the Russian Empire in the international arena and territories in Eastern Europe. In terms of its influence in Europe, the country was thrown back 200 years into the past. Under these conditions, the Soviet leadership could either agree to the regional status of the USSR, or re-start the struggle for a return to the club of great powers. Having made a choice in favor of the second alternative, the Soviet leadership adopted the concept of "world revolution", which combined the new ideology and the traditional tasks of foreign policy to strengthen the country's influence in the world. The strategic goal of the country's foreign policy was the global reorganization of the system of international relations, which made England, France and their allies the main opponents.

The complex Soviet-Polish relations of 1918-1939, which began and ended with undeclared wars, the initiative of which came first from Warsaw and then from Moscow, were studied in the second half of the 20th century in Soviet historiography, taking into account the political situation. At the same time, all the most complex topics, as a rule, were mentioned in passing, or even simply hushed up.

Political changes in the 1980s-1990s both in Poland and in the USSR, these poorly studied topics were given a purely political sound, which made them an element of political struggle rather than an object of scientific research. However, over the years, many previously inaccessible documents have been introduced into scientific circulation, and the disappearance of rigid mono-ideological pressure has made it possible to study them more comprehensively. In Russian historiography, Soviet-Polish relations in the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s have been studied much better than relations between the two countries in the late 1930s. First of all, this applies to the study of the events of September 1939 - the first works on this topic have appeared only recently<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, one of the goals of this study is a more detailed and systematic description of the Polish campaign of the Red Army in 1939 on the basis of available archival documents. In recent years, many events in the interwar history of

the 20th century have been reassessed in Russian literature. This process also affected the study of Soviet-Polish relations. However, unfortunately, often the main motive here is not the desire to deepen our knowledge of that period, but only the desire to indiscriminately denigrate Soviet foreign policy. For this, as a rule, abstract moral assessments are used, without taking into account the specific historical realities and the mentality of the era. Therefore, in our opinion, one should try to take an unbiased look at Soviet-Polish relations in their dynamics through the prism of the development of the Versailles system of international relations and the genesis of the Second World War. The author believes that every state has the right to pursue any foreign policy, but this does not mean at all that the assessment of this policy should be based only on the political situation. Moreover, it is the distant prospect that allows a more objective assessment of past events. In addition, one should not break the chain of events, which also distorts their perception. That is why, in our opinion, it is important to consider Soviet-Polish relations during the 21 interwar years. Thus, modern Russian historiography is faced with the task of comprehensively studying the path along which the Soviet Union managed to go from

a pariah of the international community to the second superpower of the world. This will allow, on the one hand, to pay tribute to our ancestors, whose sweat and blood this path was watered, and on the other hand, it will give modern Russian society certain guidelines for the future. Of course, the solution of this problem will require long-term efforts and study of the development of international relations at different levels. An integral part of this problem is the bilateral relations of the Soviet Union with other countries. Relations with the western neighbors, the largest of which was Poland, were of great importance for the Soviet leadership. Moreover, the importance of Soviet-Polish relations was determined by the fact that it was Poland that also sought to achieve the status of a "great power". That is, in this case we are talking about the consideration of the relationship between two neighboring countries striving for the same goal.

It should immediately be noted that this study is not about blaming or justifying Soviet or Polish foreign policy. The author believes that both Poland and the Soviet Union defended each their own truth, no matter how far-fetched it may seem to us now. Therefore, the main task of the work was to identify the reasons that predetermined the development of Soviet-Polish relations in 1918-1939, which separated our countries on opposite sides of the political barricades, doomed them to collision.

## Part one. CHAOS. (1917- March 1921)

In 1815 Poland again disappeared from the political map of Europe. The boundaries established in Eastern Europe by the Congress of Vienna lasted until 1914, when the outbreak of the First World War raised the question of a new territorial redistribution. As early as August 14, 1914, the Russian government declared its desire to unite the entire Polish people under the scepter of the Russian emperor, granting the Kingdom of Poland the widest possible autonomy. For their part, Germany and Austria-Hungary limited themselves to rather general declarations about the future freedom of the Poles without any specific promises. During the war, national Polish military units were created as part of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian and French armies. After the occupation of the Kingdom of Poland by German and Austro-Hungarian troops in 1915, the vast majority of the Polish population was under the control of Germany and Austria-Hungary, which on November 5, 1916, proclaimed the "independence" of the Kingdom of Poland without specifying its borders. In December 1916, the Provisional State Council was established as a governing body. Russia's retaliatory countermeasure was the statement on December 12, 1916, about the desire to create a "free Poland" from all its three parts. In January 1917 this statement was generally supported by Britain, France and the USA.

**Disintegration** Meanwhile, in February-March 1917,

the political struggle between the liberal parties and the government in Petrograd ended with the abdication of Nicholas II and the creation of the Provisional Government and the system of Soviets. Already on March 14 (27), 1917, the Petrograd Soviet declared the right of nations to self-determination, which Poland could also use<sup>4</sup>. Naturally, on March 16 (29) the Provisional Government also announced the need to create an independent Polish state in a military alliance with Russia. True, the implementation of this statement was postponed until the end of the war and the decisions of the Constituent Assembly<sup>5</sup>. Like many other abstract principles, the idea of the right of nations to

self-determination did not take into account the real difficulties associated with the mixed settlement of various ethnic groups in Eastern Europe. However, it was a very popular idea at the time. True, in Poland the idea of ethno-territorial demarcation with Russia was much less popular than the idea of restoring historical justice by recreating the Commonwealth within the borders of 1772. Therefore, already on April 6, 1917, the Provisional State Council announced that it approved the declaration of the Russian Provisional Government, but the lands between Poland and Russia should be the subject of a clarification of interests between Warsaw and Petrograd, and not a unilateral decision of the Constituent Assembly<sup>6</sup>. Created on September 12, 1917 in Warsaw, instead of the Provisional State Council, the Regency Council confirmed this position, although at that time these statements were a mere declaration, since the territory of Poland was occupied by Germany and Austria-Hungary. Meanwhile, the widespread popularization of the idea of national self-

determination led to the strengthening of centrifugal tendencies in Russia. On March 4, 1917, the Central Rada was created in Kyiv, which included M. Grushevsky, S. Petlyura and V. Vinnichenko, which demanded from the Provisional Government the widest autonomy of Ukraine and a clear definition of its borders. For its part, the Provisional Government tried to delay the full resolution of these questions until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Such a position of Petrograd only radicalized the demands of Kyiv, which in the summer of 1917 began to create its own national army. The growth of chaos and the intensification of the political struggle in Russia led to the fact that on October 25 (November 7), 1917, the Provisional Government was overthrown. The Bolsheviks and the Left Social Revolutionaries came to power, creating a new government - the Council of People's Commissars (SNK). The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, adopted on November 2 (15), 1917, recognizing their right "to free self-determination up to secession and the formation of an independent state," apparently prompted the Central Rada to declare on November 7 (20) the creation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) in within the framework of the all-Russian federation. In the meantime, on November 8 (21), the Council of People's Commissars turned to the belligerent countries with a proposal to conclude peace without annexations and indemnities. On December 15, a truce was concluded between Russia and the countries of the Quadruple Union<sup>9.4</sup> (17) December, the Council of People's Commissars recognized the UNR, pointing out at the same time the inadmissibility of disorganizing the front, disarming Russian troops and supporting A.M. Kaledin and demanding to stop such actions within 48 hours. Otherwise, the Council of People's Commissars would have considered the Central Rada in a state of "war with Soviet power in Russia and Ukraine"<sup>10</sup>. The First All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, which met in Kharkov on December 12 (25), proclaimed the creation

part of the all-Russian federation. The negotiations on peace in Brest-Litovsk that began on December 9 (22) showed that no one is interested in general declarations on the rejection of annexations and indemnities. "The delegation of the Quadruple Union insisted on the transfer of 150 thousand square kilometers of Russian western lands. the Soviet government was playing for time.

At the request of the delegation of the Quadruple Union on December 13 (26), 1917. representatives of the UNR were admitted to the negotiations in Brest-Litovsk. On December 20, 1917 (January 2, 1918), the Council of People's Commissars suggested that the Central Rada start negotiations on the settlement of relations, which never took place, since Germany decided to play on the contradictions between Petrograd and Kyiv. On January 11 (24), 1918, the UNR declared its independence, which was immediately recognized by Germany. As a result, on February 9, 1918, a UNR peace treaty was signed with the countries of the Quadruple Union, according to which Kiev received the Kholm region, and Austria-Hungary undertook to prepare by July 31, 1918 a project for separating its eastern part inhabited by Ukrainians from Galicia, and annex it as crown land to Bukovina. For its part, the UNR was supposed to supply Germany and Austria-Hungary in the first half of 1918 with 60 million poods of grain, 2,750,000 poods of meat, 400 million eggs, and other agricultural goods and industrial raw materials. In the meantime, a protest movement against the territorial terms of the treaty with the UNR was expanding in Poland. As a result, on March 4, 1918, the Central Rada announced to the Regency Council about the possibility of

revising the borders in the future. Having concluded an agreement with the UNR, on February 10, Germany put forward an ultimatum on the signing of the proposed peace treaty by the Soviet delegation. In response, the head of the delegation, L.D. Trotsky said that Russia would not sign peace, but would demobilize the army. The Soviet delegation left Brest-Litovsk. On February 18, German troops resumed their offensive and occupied the Baltic. As a result, on March 3, 1918, the Soviet government had to sign a peace treaty in Brest-Litovsk, proposed to it by the countries of the Quadruple Union. According to the agreement, the RSFSR recognized the independence of Finland and the UPR and had to withdraw its troops from their territory, as well as from Estonia and Livonia. The western border of Soviet Russia was established along the line Riga-Dvinsk-Druya-Drusvyaty-Mikhalishki-Dzevilishki-Dokudova-r. Neman-r. Zelvyanka - Pruzhany - Vidoml<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the RSFSR renounced its rights to Poland, which was favorably received in Warsaw. The Regency Council, through the mediation of Germany, offered Moscow to establish diplomatic relations, but the Soviet leadership refused on June 16, 1918, because they did not recognize the Regency Council as a representative of the will of the Polish people, considering it only as an administrative body created by the occupiers<sup>13</sup>. The

Entente did not recognize this treaty, and on March 6, 1918, British troops landed in Murmansk, marking the

beginning of foreign intervention in Russia. The expansion of the civil war in Ukraine and the failure of the UNR troops led the Central Rada to turn to Germany for support, which immediately sent its troops to its territory. As soon as it became clear that the Ukrainian Red Army could not resist the German units, which were rapidly moving east, the German authorities dispersed the Central Rada and on April 26, 1918 created a government headed by Hetman P.P. Skoropadsky. On August 29, 1918, in accordance with the requirements of the Brest Treaty, the Soviet government by its decree canceled "all treaties and acts concluded by the government of the former Russian Empire with the governments of the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, concerning the partitions of Poland, due to their contradiction with the principle of self-determination of nations and revolutionary legal consciousness of the Russian people, who recognized the inalienable right of the Polish people to independence and unity"<sup>14</sup>.

As the end of the First World War approached, the Soviet government, wishing to receive more timely information from Warsaw, on October 29, 1918, proposed to the Regency Council to accredit Y. Markhlevsky as a diplomatic representative of the RSFSR in Poland<sup>15</sup>. However, this time Warsaw, fearing the strengthening of the Bolshevik influence, kept silent<sup>16</sup>. As the situation worsened in Poland, the social movement intensified. In the autumn of 1918, about 120 soviets appeared in the country, in some places detachments of the Red Guard appeared, the peasants demanded an agrarian reform. All this forced those in power to maneuver.

Meanwhile, the situation of the countries of the Quadruple Alliance was deteriorating more and more. On October 31, 1918, a revolution began in Austria-Hungary. In Lvov, on October 18, the Ukrainian National Council headed by E. Petrushevich was created, proclaiming the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR), whose army was created on the basis of the Ukrainian military units of the Austro-Hungarian army. Accordingly, the Polish national movement became more active. October 1 in the Principality of Cieszyn was formed



The National Polish Council, which announced on October 30 the return of this territory to Poland. On October 17, 23, the Regency Council announced the creation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of War, headed by J. Pilsudski, who at that time was imprisoned in the fortress of Magdeburg in Germany. On October 25, the Liquidation Commission was created in Krakow, which took over power in Western Galicia on behalf of the Polish state. On October 27, the Regency Council announced the creation of the Polish army with the inclusion of all Polish military formations in its composition. On November 7, a "people's government" arose in Lublin, which announced the dissolution of the Regency Council, proclaimed civil liberties, an 8-hour working day, the nationalization of forests, granted and majorate estates, the creation of self-governments and a civil militia. All other social demands were postponed until the decisions of the Legislative Seimas. Realizing that power was slipping out of their hands, the Regency Council secured the release of Pilsudski from Germany, who arrived in Warsaw on November 10. Negotiations with the Regency Council and the Lublin government led to the fact that on November 14 power was transferred to Pilsudski. On November 22, he signed a decree on the organization of the highest power in the Polish Republic, according to which Pilsudski was appointed "temporary head of state", who had full legislative and executive power. In fact, it was about the creation of Pilsudski's dictatorship, covered with a beautiful position - at the end of the 18th century. the head of state was T. Kosciuszko. **Formation of the Soviet-**

**Polish front** On November 11, 1918, Germany

signed an armistice in Compiègne, according to which it abandoned the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. On November 13, Moscow also annulled this treaty<sup>18</sup>, which made its provisions non-existent. On November 16, Piłsudski notified all countries except the RSFSR of the creation of an independent Polish state. On November 26-28, during the exchange of notes on the fate of the mission of the Regency Council, located in Moscow, the Soviet government announced its readiness to establish diplomatic relations with Poland. On December 4, Warsaw announced that there would be no discussion of this problem until the issue of the mission was resolved. During the exchange of notes in December 1918, the Soviet side three times offered to establish diplomatic relations, but Poland refused these proposals under various pretexts. from the RSFSR<sup>21</sup>. Thus, Moscow recognized Poland and was ready to normalize relations with it, but Warsaw was preoccupied with defining its borders. Like most other politicians, Piłsudski was a supporter of the restoration of the Polish border of 1772 and believed that the longer the confusion continued in Russia, the more territories Poland would be able to control. Piłsudski's peculiar maximum program was the creation of a number of national states on the territory of European Russia, which would be under the influence of Warsaw. This, in his opinion, would allow Poland to become a great power, replacing Russia in Eastern Europe.

In November 1918 German troops began to withdraw from the occupied territories, which freed the hands of all interested parties. The Red Army moved west following the outgoing German units. The Pskov and 17th Rifle Divisions of the Western Defense Region, renamed on November 15 into the Western Army, operated on the territory of Latvia and Belarus (commander - A.E. Snegarev, members of the Revolutionary Military Council (RVS) - A.M. Pyzhev, I.Ya. Alibegov). On the night of November 17, the advanced units of the Western Army crossed the demarcation line and began to advance in the direction of Polotsk, Mogilev, Bobruisk and Gomel. Already on November 21, Soviet troops entered Polotsk, on November 28 - in Bobruisk, on December 8 - in Slutsk, on December 9 - in Dvinsk (Daugavpils), on December 10 - in Minsk, on January 6, 1919 - in Gomel, on January 12 - to Mozyr, January 13 - to Slonim,

On January 25, units of the UPR were driven out of Pinsk, and on February 2, from Ovruch. Meanwhile, on the territory of Smolensk, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Minsk and Vilna provinces, the Minsk Military District was created on November 28, renamed on December 14 to Western. From that moment on, the Western Army carried out only operational tasks. By December 12, the Western Army, which numbered 7,620 bayonets, 220 sabers, 204 machine guns and 18 guns, occupied an almost 900-kilometer front. On December 27, the "Group of Latvia" was detached from the Western Army, advancing in the direction of Riga.

On December 16, 1918, the Lithuanian SSR was proclaimed, and on December 22, the RSFSR recognized its independence<sup>23</sup>. The Polish population of Lithuania and Belarus created a self-defense system - the Committee for the Defense of the Eastern Outskirts (KZVO), which turned to Warsaw for help. This allowed Piłsudski to justify his expansionist plans with the slogan of protecting the Poles. On December 21, in Vilna, local Poles created a Provisional Commission for the Administration of the District of Northern Lithuania, which naturally provoked a negative reaction from both pro-Soviet and nationalist Lithuanian authorities. For

Warsaw, this step became a political cover for the capture of Vilna: the troops received the order to do so on December 19th. On January 1, 1919, Polish units occupied Vilna, but on January 3, units of the Red Army approached the city and on January 6 drove the Poles out of it. On January 12, 1919, the Western Army was tasked to continue the offensive to the west, to gain a foothold "on the Kovno-Olita-Grodno-Mosty-Slonim-Luninets line" and to conduct reconnaissance "in the direction of Memel-Tilsit-Verzhbolovo-Suvalki-Bialystok-Brest-Litovsk"<sup>24</sup>.

At the end of January, Soviet units occupied Kovno and Grodno, but the German East Prussian volunteer corps of General M. Hoffmann pushed them back 60-80 km to the east in the first half of February. On January 16, Soviet troops, 26 km west of Lida, came into contact with Polish legionnaires, and on January 28, Polish detachments with a total number of over 1,000 fighters appeared 20-30 km northwest of Slonim. By February 13, the Red Army occupied the Panevez-Slonim-Bereza Kartuzskaya-Ivanovo (Yanov Polesky)-Sarny-Ovruch front. On February 22, the commander-in-chief of the Red Army I.I. Vatsetis demanded "to firmly gain a foothold on the occupied lines along the Tukum-Shavli-Ponevezh-Vilkomir-Zhosli-Orany-Lida-Slonim-r. Shara-Oginsky Canal-Pinsk-Sarny, continuing, according to the situation, the advancement of the avant-garde and reconnaissance units in the direction of Libava-Tilsit-Kovno-Grodno-Volkovysk-Brest-Litovsk-Kovel and Rovno

As early as December 30, 1918, Warsaw declared to Moscow that the offensive of the Red Army in Lithuania and Belarus was an aggressive act against Poland, imputing "the Polish government the obligation to respond in the most energetic way." Therefore, in the near future, it is preparing to defend "territories inhabited by the Polish nation." On January 7, 1919, Moscow responded by stating that the Soviet troops had nowhere entered territory "which could be considered as belonging to the Polish Republic." Accordingly, on February 8, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR G.V. Chicherin pointed out to the representatives of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in Minsk the need to keep the Polish volunteers of the Red Army from entering the Polish regions. Meanwhile, on January 1, 1919, the Byelorussian SSR was proclaimed. On February 3, the Congress of Soviets of the BSSR spoke in favor of a federation with the RSFSR. On February 10, Moscow again proposed to Warsaw to establish normal relations<sup>27</sup>. On February 16, the Soviet authorities of Lithuania and Belarus proposed to Poland to agree on borders, but Warsaw kept silent.

In turn, the Polish troops moved east and liquidated the Ukrainian administration in the Kholm region, in Brest, Zhabinka, Kobrin and Volodymyr Volynsky. Already

on February 4, 1919, the Poles occupied Kovel, and on February 9 - Brest-Litovsk. On February 5, under pressure from France, a German-Polish agreement was signed on the evacuation of German troops from Lithuania and Belarus and their replacement by Polish troops<sup>30</sup>. On February 9-14, German troops let two Polish task forces (up to 10 thousand people) pass through their formations to the line of the river. Neman to Skidel-r. Zelvyanka-r. Ruzhanka-Pruzhany-Kobrin. Then the Poles occupied Bialystok, from where the German units left. From February 1919, a continuous Soviet-Polish front arose from the river. Neman to the river. Pripyat. On February 18, under pressure from France, a German-Polish truce was signed in Poznan, which allowed the Poles to transfer troops to the east. For his part, the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army on February 12 ordered the formation of the Western Front from February 19 "as part of the 7 [th] Army, the Army of Latvia and the Western Army", which D.N. was appointed commander from February 23. Reliable, members of the

RVS - R.A. Rimm and A.Ya. 31 Semashko On February 20, a Polish detachment, dressed in German uniforms, with the support of an armored train, captured several settlements along the Kobrin-Pinsk railway, but the next day the Soviet troops restored the situation. On March 2, 1919, the Polish units of General S. Sheptytsky occupied Slonim, on March 5, units of General A. Listovsky - Pinsk<sup>32</sup>. The Soviet troops were forced to retreat, since on March 4 the offensive of the troops of A.V. Kolchak on the Eastern Front, and units began to be transferred there from the west. The position of parts of the Western Front became more complicated. The discipline in the parts of the Western Army was also low, which on March 13 was renamed the

Belarusian-Lithuanian Army. So, on March 24-29, the 67th and 68th rifle regiments of the 8th rifle division left their positions without permission, captured Gomel and mutinied. Member of the Board of the Cheka G.S. On April 22, 1919, Moroz reported to the Central Committee of the RCP (b) that the entire western region was saturated with anti-Semitism, which was a breeding ground for counter-revolutionary actions in Gomel, Rechitsa and Borisov<sup>33</sup>.

In addition, their scarcity affected the position of the Soviet troops. So, on March 1, 1919, the Belarusian-Lithuanian army on a 720-kilometer front had only 25,906 bayonets, 272 sabers, 131

machine gun and 54 guns. The Commission of the Higher Military Inspectorate, which examined the state of Soviet troops in the Vilna region on March 12 - April 5, 1919, noted in its conclusion that "the main negative phenomenon of this front should certainly be considered the small number of Red Army soldiers, which ridiculously does not correspond to combat missions and with the length front." This has a detrimental effect "on the general mood of the Red Army men" and decomposes the combat units of the front, since "it entails complete distrust in one's own combat forces and in the ability to carry out operational orders," giving rise to fear of being bypassed by the enemy. Noting that there were 5-8-kilometer gaps between the outposts, and 35-kilometer gaps between the regiments that were not occupied by troops, the commission concluded that "in the event of an enemy offensive, Vilna can be freely taken two days after the enemy goes on the offensive"<sup>34</sup> . By March 15, the Belarusian-Lithuanian army, which received only 2,251 reinforcements in the first half of March, occupied the Orana-Lida-Baranovichi-Luninets line. The command of the Western Front

demanded that the army troops actively support operations in Latvia and Polissya<sup>35</sup> . In the meantime, the Polish detachments began to go over to the offensive. On March 17, Soviet troops left Baranovichi, but on March 25 they were able to drive the Poles out of the city. On March 26, a fierce battle took place on the outskirts of Lida, during which the Polish detachments were driven back from the city. On April 8, the enemy occupied Orany, but on April 10, the Soviet units recaptured the city. The spring thaw suspended major operations on the front of the Belarusian-Lithuanian army. Accordingly, already on March 31, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RVSR) decided to transfer part of the troops from the Western Front to the Eastern Front. On April 17, the commander-in-chief reported to V.I. Lenin, that "Over the past month, the Western Front has lost its sharp character, and here we have switched to active reconnaissance and the capture of points of local importance, which indicates that the enemy on this front, due to some reasons, is not in a position to proceed to active operations"<sup>36</sup> . However, this lull was short-lived. On March 16-24, 1919, unofficial Soviet-Polish negotiations were held in Moscow, during which the Polish mission put forward the following terms of the agreement. The RSFSR was required, firstly, not to use the Red Army to support the revolution in Poland; secondly, not to create a Soviet Polish government and, thirdly, it was proposed to establish a border on the basis of self-determination

the population of the disputed territories with the withdrawal of the troops of the parties from there<sup>37</sup> . In general, Moscow accepted these conditions, but Warsaw did not enter into formal negotiations, as the Piłsudski government sought to

grab like as much territory as possible. Thus, the new Polish government tried to solve several problems at once. Conscription to the army reduced the high level of unemployment and social tension, the occupied territories made it possible to obtain material resources and rally the Polish population on the basis of nationalist slogans, distracting them from the revolution. Kolchak's successes on the Eastern Front made the victory of the White Army quite real, and in these conditions Poland feared that the Entente would support the territorial demands of Russia, and sought to capture as much as possible.

As the American representative at the mission of the Entente states in Poland, Major General J. Kernan, pointed out in his report on April 11, 1919 to President W. Wilson, "although in Poland all messages **and conversations constantly talk about the aggression of the Bolsheviks, I could not notice anything similar. On the contrary, I noted with satisfaction that even minor skirmishes on the eastern borders of Poland testified rather to the aggressive actions of the Poles and the intention to occupy Russian lands as soon as possible and advance as far as possible. The ease with which they succeeded proves that the Poles were not opposed by well-organized Soviet armed forces. I am convinced that the aggressive militant crusade launched from Russia, the center of dissemination of Bolshevik propaganda or the Soviet movement, has been stopped. But it can be brought back to life by aggressive actions from outside, and they can be expected both from Poland and other states.** Table 1 Distribution of the Polish Army on fronts<sup>39</sup>

Total	them at the front of	Including Of the East. Galicia   Volyn   Belarus   Silesia			
April 1, 1919					
Personnel	81030	60 528	5437	11612	3453
of them fighters?	53 046	37 689	4051	8 888	2418
June 20, 1919					

Personnel 278 763 162618	76 822	44875	40921
of which fighters 154,562 94,640	49434	23 217	21989
August 15, 1919			
Personnel 300,097 165,005	57 556	30 997	76452 9
of which 152,307 fighters 87,399	28 928	17 386	41095 ?

However, so far the main attention of the Polish leadership was attracted by the situation in the southeast, where, as already noted, on November 9, 1918, the ZUNR was proclaimed, headed by President E. Petrushevich, whose territory covered Eastern Galicia, Lemkov -shchyna, Transcarpathia and Bukovina. On November 1, 1918, the Polish population of Lvov raised an uprising and captured the city. At the same time, the Polish troops of General V. Ivashkevich captured the eastern Kholmshchyna and Podlyashye, which had retreated along the Brest peace to the UNR. On November 9, the Poles drove the Ukrainian units out of Przemyśl. With this, in fact, the Polish-Ukrainian war began. On January 3, 1919, the ZUNR and the UNR merged. In January 1919, Ukrainian units controlled the entire territory of Eastern Galicia, except for Lvov and the Lvov-Peremyshl railway. Attempts at mediation by the Entente countries led only to brief truces. England was the first to play this role. However, the January talks showed that the positions of the parties are completely incompatible. The Ukrainians demanded a border along the river. San, the Poles insisted on the line of the river. Styr-Busk-Rogatin-Rotten Lipa-Lomnica (that is, 2/3 of Eastern Galicia and Western Volhynia remained with Poland). England proposed as a compromise a line from the Bug to the Dniester with the transfer of Lvov to Poland. It is clear that the negotiations ended in vain and the Ukrainian units resumed their offensive against Lvov. On February 22, France already demanded an armistice, but new negotiations again ended in vain<sup>40</sup>. From November 1918 to April 1919, 60-80% of the Polish troops operated in Eastern Galicia. In mid-March 1919, the 70,000-strong army of General Yu. Haller from France began to arrive in Poland. On March 22, at the request of the Entente, the Ukrainians again suspended hostilities, but the negotiations again did not lead to anything, since Poland was not interested in drawing excessive attention of the Paris Peace Conference to the Galician issue

41.

In Paris, Polish representatives argued that Eastern Galicia should be annexed to Poland, and the UNR could not be recognized. In conditions of legal uncertainty, Poland sought to seize as much territory as possible in order to present the Entente with a fait accompli. On April 20, the Poles launched an offensive, which made the Ukrainians more accommodating, but Poland made no demands. Although England offered to declare a truce and give the Paris Conference an opportunity to discuss the Galician question, Poland, relying on the support of France, on May 14 increased the force of the blow, using Haller's army for this. At the same time, Warsaw's disregard for all the proposals of the conference led the Entente to increase diplomatic pressure on Poland at the end of May. In addition, there were fears that Germany would refuse to sign the Treaty of Versailles, and it was decided to use Polish troops to put pressure on Berlin<sup>43</sup>.

However, the successes of the Red Army in Ukraine and the revolution in Hungary distracted the Entente from the Galician question. The desire to prevent Soviet troops from connecting with the Hungarians, who at that time occupied eastern Slovakia and were located 20 kilometers from the river. San, led to the fact that it was decided to allow Poland to occupy Eastern Galicia, but while maintaining its autonomy. On June 25, 1919, the Council of Foreign Ministers of England, France, Italy and the USA authorized Poland to occupy Eastern Galicia up to the river. Zbruch. The question of the fate of Eastern Galicia was postponed until a plebiscite, which was to be held later. This decision freed Poland's hands, and by July 17, all of Eastern Galicia was occupied by Polish troops. On November 21, 1919, the Supreme Council of the Entente granted Poland a 25-year mandate to govern Eastern Galicia, but on December 10, Warsaw protested, citing the fact that Eastern Galicia was an integral part of the country. Although

On December 22, the Entente confirmed its decision<sup>44</sup>, the fate of Eastern Galicia was postponed to the future<sup>45</sup>. In addition to Poland, Romania, which seized Bukovina, and Czechoslovakia, which demanded the transfer of Lemko and Transcarpathia, claimed the territory of the ZUNR.

While all these events were unfolding in Galicia, the troops of the 12th Soviet Army, transferred on June 4 to the Western Front from the disbanded Ukrainian Front, in mid-June 1919 came into contact with the Polish units in the Pinsk and Kovel directions. However, so far in Ukraine, the main enemy of the Red Army was the troops of the UNR, which, having united with the Galician army and using the successes of the Volunteer Army of A.I. Denikin in the Donbass, went on the offensive and began to occupy the Right-Bank Ukraine. Meanwhile, in Volyn, the Poles captured Dubno and Kremenets on August 9, and Rovno on August 13. On September 1, an armistice was signed between Poland and the UNR. towards the middle



October 1919 The 12th Army held the Mozyr-Zhytomyr-r. Black grouse, being covered from three sides: Polish units operated from the west, Petliurists from the south-west, and Denikin's Volunteer Army from the south-east. In November-December 1919, the Polish units used the withdrawal of Denikin's troops to advance to the line of the river. Harvest - Olevska - Novograd-Volynsky - Proskurov - Kamenets Podolsk. In turn, the 12th Army in November

1919 - February 1920, together with the 14th Army, liberated the Right-Bank Ukraine and came into contact with the Polish troops from Polesie to the Dniester. On November 6, 1919, the Galician army submitted to Denikin, and in January 1920 to the Red Army<sup>46</sup>.

On February 13, 1920, a 15,000-strong detachment of Denikin's General N.E. Bredov, departing from Odessa along the Dniester. After two weeks of negotiations, on March 1, Bredov's agreement was signed with the Polish military command, according to which his detachment was allowed to cross into the territory occupied by Polish troops, having previously deposited weapons with them and sold most of the horses. For their part, the Polish military authorities undertook to assist the Bredovites in returning to the territory occupied by the Volunteer Army. In connection with the typhus epidemic, the detachment was placed in three quarantine camps. From mid-May 1920, Poland asked France to assist in sending this detachment to the Crimea, but only on July 5 did the first echelon start sending to Romania to the Black Sea ports. Arriving in the Crimea, Bredov noted in an interview with a local newspaper that the treatment of internees was not very good, but when the Red Army went on the offensive, the attitude of the Poles changed for the better<sup>47</sup>.

### **Negotiations and**

**seizures** Along with the battles in Galicia, the Polish command, having completed the regrouping and concentration of troops, stepped up its operations in Belarus. Using the 40-kilometer gap between the flanks of the Lithuanian and Western divisions, on April 16, 1919, Polish troops under the command of General E. Rydz Smigly attacked Lida from three sides. The Lida garrison, which consisted mainly of Polish Red Army soldiers, consisted of 1,300 bayonets and 80 sabers with 2 guns. Despite the suddenness of the attack, the Soviet troops offered stubborn resistance to the enemy, the city changed hands twice. Only by pulling up additional forces, the Poles were able to occupy Lida on April 17. After four days of fierce fighting, the Polish units occupied Novogrudok on April 18, and Baranovichi on April 19. On April 19, a Polish detachment was sent by rail from Lida to Vilna (200 bayonets and 150 sabers with several guns), dressed in Red Army uniforms. Having freely penetrated the city and occupied strategically important points, the Poles opened fire, which caused panic. At 13 o'clock they occupied the Castle Hill. The captured station and railway allowed the Poles to transfer reinforcements. Nevertheless, the fighting in the city, in which volunteers from the local 48 residents actively participated on both sides, continued until April 21, when the Soviet units left it. The entire expansionist program of Warsaw was covered by the slogan

of creating a federation led by Poland. It is curious that this idea went back to the report of the Polish general in the French service M. Sokolnitsky to Napoleon I dated February 10, 1812<sup>49</sup> On April 15, 1919, Poland proposed to Lithuania to restore the Polish-Lithuanian union, but this proposal did not find support in Kaunas. Nevertheless, the Polish leadership planned to frame the capture of Vilna as an action necessary for the free unification of Poland and Lithuania. Nevertheless, it was not possible to create a Polish-Lithuanian government. Instead, the military-occupation power of the Polish administration, the Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands (GUVZ), was extended to the Vilnius region. Thus, Piłsudski's promise contained in his appeal "To the inhabitants of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania" that he wants to give them "the opportunity to resolve internal, national and religious problems at their own discretion, without any violence or pressure from Poland", remained unfulfilled, which further reduced the chances of an agreement with the national Lithuanian government. The Entente countries were in no hurry to legitimize the Polish capture. Upon learning of the loss of Vilna, the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army canceled the transfer of the 8th Infantry Division from the Western to the Southern Front<sup>50</sup>.

and on April 24-25 demanded that "the situation near Vilna be restored at all costs"<sup>51</sup>. However, the preparation of the operation was delayed, during which time the Poles managed to transfer additional forces to Vilna. On May 27-28, Soviet troops began to attack Vilna from three sides, but the lack of communications made it impossible to coordinate the course of the operation. The Molodechno group approached 5 km to the city, but losses among the command staff led to the cessation of attacks and a withdrawal of 15 km. The detachment advancing from Novosventsyan collided with the Polish cavalry and was forced to retreat. The Lithuanian division approached 5-6 km from the north to Vilna, but the army command did not know about this. In fierce

In battles, the division suffered heavy losses in the command staff and on May 2 began to retreat. Meanwhile, the enemy occupied 52 Oshmyany and actively operated on the flanks of the Soviet troops. On May 3, the Byelorussian-Lithuanian army was ordered, "continuing the Vilna operation, to pay serious attention to the direction of Lida-Molodechno", where a reserve should be created<sup>53</sup>. However, the battles for Vilna actually ended there.

At the beginning of May 1919, the Soviet-Polish front stabilized again, since Poland, at the suggestion of the Entente, had to prepare for actions against Germany, which could not agree to the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty. This, however, did not prevent the Polish troops from gradually advancing in the direction of Ponevezh-Molodechno, which created a threat to Dvinsk and Polotsk, which the Belarussian-Lithuanian army had nothing to fend off, since its number was reduced to 16 thousand bayonets<sup>54</sup>. On May 24-25, army troops were ordered to attack Vilna again from the Postavy-Smorgon front, but the activation of the enemy in the Molodechno and Luninets directions did not allow this plan to be implemented. Meanwhile, on May 4, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) decided to unify the command of all the armies of the RSFSR and other Soviet republics. Accordingly, on June 7, the Latvian Army was renamed the 15th Army, and the Belarussian-Lithuanian Army - the 16th Army<sup>56</sup>.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of conflicts of that time in Eastern Europe were replete with mutual bitterness and blatant manifestations of inhumanity. In this regard, the advance of the Polish army to the east, which began in

February 1919, was no different from the actions of other armed detachments. Thus, the future Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland in the 1930s, Yu. Beck, told his father Yu. organization made his way through the "Bolshevized Ukraine": "In the villages, we killed everyone without exception and burned everything at the slightest suspicion of insincerity. I personally worked with the butt. Severe bombardments and shelling of ungarrisoned cities were periodically undertaken. The objects of shelling often became medical institutions marked with identification marks. The occupation of cities and towns was accompanied by arbitrary reprisals by the military against local representatives of the Soviet government, as well as Jewish pogroms, posed as acts of eradicating Bolshevism. So, after the occupation of Pinsk, by order of the commandant of the Polish garrison, about 40 Jews who came to pray were shot on the spot, without trial, who were mistaken for a meeting of Bolsheviks. The medical staff of the hospital was arrested and several orderlies were shot. Although these facts were widely publicized, the military command denied the civilian administration access to the documents. The crime was justified by the nervous tension of the officers in the battles with the Bolsheviks, and his direct culprit was transferred to another place with a promotion.

No wonder the appearance of Polish troops in Lithuania and Belarus immediately caused local uprisings. The aggravation of antagonism forced Pilsudski to further refuse to support the Belarussian national movement. Despite the fact that some Polish newspapers wrote indignantly about the atrocities of the army in the east back in March, the capture of Vilna was marked by a bacchanalia of reprisals against defenders or people simply sympathizing with the Soviet regime that stretched for several weeks: arrests, sending to concentration camps, torture and torture in prisons, executions without trial, including the elderly, women and children, Jewish pogroms and mass robberies. Local residents were completely defenseless against the arbitrariness and perverted excesses of the country's army, which called itself a bastion of Christian civilization in the fight against Bolshevism and, in general, "Eastern barbarism." According to the representative of the GUVZ M. Kossakovsky, killing or torturing a Bolshevik was not considered a sin. "In the presence of General Listovsky (commander of the operational group in Polesie), the boy was shot only because he allegedly smiled unkindly." One officer "shot dozens of people just because they were poorly dressed and looked like Bolsheviks ... about 20 exiles who arrived from behind the front line were killed ... these people were robbed, flogged with barbed wire whips, burned red-hot iron to obtain false confessions. Kossakovsky was an eyewitness to the following "experiment": "a live cat was sewn into someone's open stomach and betted who would die first, a man or a cat"<sup>57</sup>. On June 2, the Poles began to advance in the Postavy direction. Soviet troops repeatedly. Hoping for a complication of the German-Polish

<sup>58</sup> launched counterattacks, but without much success in relations, the commander of the Western Front on June 16 ordered the 15th and 16th armies to prepare for the development of "active operations to capture [the line] Vilna-Lida-Baranovichi, which we lost in April." It was believed that before the arrival of reinforcements, it was possible to reach the Dvinsk-Sventsyany line.

Oshmyany. For the 12th Army, defensive actions were envisaged with access to the river. Stokhod and, if possible, mastering Kovel<sup>59</sup>. The entire second half of June was spent in small skirmishes of scouts and the regrouping of the troops of the parties. Before the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Poland tried not to get carried away with an offensive to the east, but after June 28 it resumed. Having concentrated 23,217

fighters against 12,950 in Soviet units, the Polish troops began advancing from Vilna to Vileyka and from Lida to Volozhin on the morning of July 1. The aim of the new Polish offensive was to be Minsk and advance to the Orsha-Mogilev-Zhlobin-Mozyr line. On the same day they captured Vileyka, on July 4 - Molodechno, and on July 7 - Luninets. By July 9, the front in Belarus passed along the line of Sharkovshchiz-on-Voropaevo-Lake. Naroch - art. Zalesye-r. Berezina (flowing into the Neman) - Volozhin - Pershay - Ivenets - Kamen - Nalibok - Kolyadino - Kletsk - Gantsevichi - r. Yaselda - r. Pripyat. On July 10, the Poles occupied Lipica and Turov. In the second half of July, Soviet troops tried several times to drive the enemy out of Vileyka and Molodechno, but did not achieve success. The command of the Western Front tried to organize counterattacks by the left flank of the 15th Army from the north to the Godutsishki-Postavy area in the rear of the enemy advancing towards Minsk. The troops of the 16th Army were to counterattack from Minsk to Vileyka. However, scattered attacks, although they delayed the advance of the enemy, could not turn the tide at the front<sup>60</sup>.

On July 17, the 16th Army, somewhat replenished to 17,528 bayonets and sabers, went on the offensive and, breaking through the front, came close to Vileyka, advancing 40 km with battles. However, the Polish command had immeasurably large forces at its disposal and, having brought up reinforcements, with a short blow threw back both flanks of the 16th Army to the east. As a result, Soviet troops in the Minsk region were engulfed by enemy troops. By July 25, about 8 thousand bayonets were operating from the Soviet side in the city area against 12 thousand bayonets and 2 thousand sabers of the enemy. On July 23, the 16th Army was ordered to equip defense centers in Borisov, Polotsk, Bobruisk and Mozyr<sup>61</sup>. By July 28, Polish units northwest of Minsk reached the Radoshkovichi-Rakov front. On July 29-30, the command of the Western Front demanded that the 16th Army counterattack the enemy from Polotsk towards Vileyka and Molodechno, which was supposed to fetter

Polish units near Minsk<sup>63</sup>. Meanwhile, Polish troops fought around Minsk from the northeast, entering the rear of its defenders.

Under these conditions, despite the orders of the commander of the Western Front to hold the city<sup>64</sup>, Soviet units left Minsk on August 8. **Table 2**

**Number of troops of the 16th Army<sup>65</sup> Date**

June	<b>Total Bayonets Sabers Guns Machine</b>			
1, 1919	<b>guns ? 14318 944 168 416</b>			
July 1, 1919	42 111	12310	640	125 270
August 30, 1919	28,783	13,794	620	116 244
September 10, 1919	45,505	17,615	1,030	79 323
November 1, 1919	14,860	830	97	February 15, 396
1920	24,666	6,845	640	84 292

In mid-August, Polish troops resumed their advance towards Borisov, Igumen and Bobruisk. On August 10, the Poles occupied Slutsk, and on August 12, Abbot. Accordingly, on August 14, the 16th Army was tasked with holding Dokshitsy, creating defenses along the river. Berezina and, using a wooded swampy area, defend Borisov and Bobruisk<sup>66</sup>. Attempts by the RVS of the 16th Army to receive any reinforcements due to the difficult situation on the Southern Front were again rejected. The troops were ordered to "group the most combat-ready units on the main roads, organizing the observation of gaps. When pressed by the enemy, withdraw for short distances, no more than 5 versts, lingering at various lines with the goal of forcing the enemy to turn around as often as possible and thereby slow down his movement". Gradually, the enemy managed to push the troops of the 16th Army across the river. Berezina and capture Borisov on August 18. On August 22, the Commander of the Western Front ordered "by all means to cover the Polotsk direction" and defend Bobruisk "to the last opportunity"<sup>68</sup>, which, however, did not prevent the Poles from occupying the city on August 28.

Moreover, in early September, the Polish units in the Bobruisk region crossed the Berezina and launched an offensive against Rogachev, Zhlobin and Rechitsa, bypassing Mozyr. In this situation, the commander of the Western Front decided to transfer the Latvian division from the 15th Army to Mogilev to attack the flank and rear

69 of the advancing enemy to . However, even before its arrival, units of the 8th Infantry Division on September 10 managed to stop the advance of the Poles to Rogachev and Zhlobin and pushed them back to Bobruisk. Then, on September 11, the commander of the Western Front set the 16th Army the task of forcing the Berezina, reaching the Igumen-Osipovichi line in order to encircle the enemy's Bobruisk grouping and further advance on Minsk<sup>70</sup> . However, the operation scheduled for September 25 did not take place due to the aggravation of the situation on the Southern Front. Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army S.S. Kamenev believed that in order to defeat Denikin, "a temporary weakening of the Western Front in order to strengthen the Southern Front is inevitable, since, under the conditions of the time, there is no other way to provide quick real assistance in the most vulnerable areas"<sup>71</sup> . Already on September 21, it was decided to transfer the Latvian division from the Western Front, and then other units.

Meanwhile, at the end of August, fierce fighting broke out in the upper reaches of the Berezina. The Soviet command set the 16th Army the task of advancing from Lepel to Dokshitsy and further to Vileika, while the 15th Army was to attack from Pridruisk to Dokshitsy-Postavy-Vileika. Polish troops, which numbered 16 thousand bayonets, 2 thousand sabers and 50 guns,

#### **The offensive of the Polish troops to the East. February 1919-April 1920 resisted Soviet**

units with a total number of 11 thousand bayonets, 350 sabers and 49 guns<sup>72</sup> . However, the main forces of the 15th Army participated in the battles for Pskov with the army of General N.N. Yudenich, so the concerted strike did not work. Meanwhile, on August 25, the Polish units launched an offensive towards Dvinsk, occupied Zarasai on August 26 and forced the 4th Infantry Division to withdraw. On August 27, Kamenev demanded to keep the city "at all costs." Although on August 30 the 4th division withdrew beyond the river. Western Dvina, but the Soviet units held the bridgeheads in front of Dvinsk and Drissa. The command of the 15th army transferred the Estonian brigade, the 2nd Latvian regiment and other units here. The troops of the 16th Army supported the defensive efforts of the neighbor by advancing from Lepel towards Disna. The fighting in this area continued for a month, but although the Polish units reached the Western Dvina from Dvinsk to Polotsk, they failed to capture these cities<sup>73</sup> .

In the second half of October - the first half of November 1919, fierce battles continued around Lepel. The Poles sought to break through along the Western Dvina River to Polotsk and Vitebsk. The 16th Army repelled these attacks and counterattacked the enemy itself, while the 15th Army continued to defend on the 74 approaches to Dvinsk. occupying 380-

On November 24, they were driven back across the <sup>75</sup>. river by a kilometer front, there were

7,800 bayonets, about 1,100 sabers and 70 guns. The command of the Western Front estimated the enemy forces at 40 thousand bayonets, 3 thousand sabers with 181 guns<sup>76</sup> . As a result, the Red Army held Polotsk, and the onset of winter reduced the activity of the troops of the parties to the level of search patrols. On January 3, 1920, the Poles, together with the Latvian troops, occupied Dvinsk (Daugavpils)<sup>77</sup> .

The Polish offensive led to new problems in diplomatic contacts with Moscow. Having learned about the capture of Vilna, the Soviet side demanded the departure of A. Ventskovsky from Moscow, and unofficial contacts were interrupted<sup>78</sup> . New unofficial talks between the parties took place in July in Bialowieza, where Venckowski met with Markhlevsky, who, on behalf of Moscow, proposed a peace agreement to Poland, but was refused, citing the difficult international situation. Nevertheless, the parties agreed to hold a\*Conference of the Red Cross Societies. Moscow's consent was already received on August 17

<sup>79</sup>. During the campaign of Denikin's troops against Moscow, the Polish leadership took a wait-and-see position, since the victory in Russia of the "Whites", who did not recognize Poland's rights to Western Belarusian and Western Ukrainian lands, would create a lot of problems for Warsaw. In addition, the poor harvest of the summer of 1919 and the early winter raised the question for the Poles whether Poland would be able to fight at all. At the same time, Pilsudski could not accept Moscow's proposals to conclude peace, since in this case the army would have to be demobilized, which would only spur general discontent in the country. On the other hand, the protracted war caused dissatisfaction among the Polish population, discipline fell in the army, desertion grew among the recruits, and the soldiers gradually became susceptible to Bolshevik propaganda. All this forced the Polish leadership on September 4 to agree to the holding of the Conference of the Red Cross Societies, which actually resulted in informal

negotiations with Moscow, which took place on October 10-December 13, 1919. at Mikashevichi station. On November 2, an agreement on hostages was signed, according to which the RSFSR released and sent the arrested Poles to Poland. On November 9, an agreement was signed on the exchange of civilian prisoners, but the Polish troops did not allow refugees to cross the front line, not wanting to deal with them. But above all, these negotiations were used



by the Soviet side to find out the immediate plans of the Polish leadership. After all, only about 6 thousand bayonets remained in the 16th Army and, of course, it would not be able to contain the Polish offensive. However, the Soviet leadership had information that Warsaw believes that "a further offensive objectively becomes" another person's hands raking heat "from the Russian crucible for the coalition and shedding Polish blood to restore" all of Russia "with a repaired tsarism at the head." On October 29, Markhevsky informed Moscow that, according to the Polish representative I. Börner, "the Poles will not attack. They want the defeat of Denikin. They assure us that units can be removed from the front." Accordingly, on November 17, the 16th Army received the task of stopping all active operations and going on the defensive. As a result, the negotiations were interrupted by the Polish side, when it became clear that Denikin's campaign against Moscow was GOING ON. In an effort to relieve

#### Warsaw

of responsibility for the termination of negotiations, on November 28, 1919, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Skrzhinsky, in response to a request from the Polish Sejm, stated that Poland was ready for a peace agreement with the Soviets, but Moscow allegedly never offered Poland such an agreement, that she threatened Poland with an invasion and does not want to meet "legitimate Polish demands"<sup>81</sup>. This statement became known in Moscow, and in order to dispel any misunderstandings that could impede the establishment of peaceful relations between the two countries, the Soviet government sent a note to Poland on December 22, in which it again proposed "immediately start negotiations aimed at concluding a lasting and lasting peace"<sup>82</sup>.

Meanwhile, on December 8, 1919, the Supreme Council of the Entente announced the Declaration on the temporary eastern borders of Poland, according to which the border was the line of ethnographic predominance of the Polish population from East Prussia to the former Russian-Austrian border on the Bug.

<sup>83</sup> Not a word was said in the declaration about the lands occupied by Poland in the east. Gradually, the idea of creating a "cordon sanitaire" on the western borders of Soviet Russia was formed in the West, the implementation of which required the creation of a strong Poland as a counterweight to Germany and Russia. Under these conditions, the Polish leadership tried to play on the "threat of Bolshevism" in order to obtain material support from the Entente. However, given the peace proposals of Moscow and the devastation in Russia, England and the United States were rather skeptical of these Polish statements, which, however, did not prevent them from providing Poland with some support in military equipment in exchange for. In total, in the <sup>84</sup> penetration into the Polish economy spring of 1920, England, France and the United States delivered to Poland 1,494 guns, 2,800 machine guns, 385,500 rifles, 42,000 revolvers, about 700 aircraft, 200 armored vehicles, 800 trucks, 576 million rounds of ammunition, 10 million shells, 4,500 wagons, 3 million sets of uniforms, 4 million pairs of shoes, communications equipment and medicines<sup>85</sup>.

Without waiting for an answer, on January 28, 1920, the Soviet leadership addressed the government of Poland and the Polish people with a statement stating that the policy of the RSFSR towards Poland was based not on random temporary military or diplomatic combinations, but on the unshakable principle of national self-determination and that the Soviet The government has unconditionally recognized and continues to recognize the independence and sovereignty of the Polish Republic. The government of the RSFSR, on behalf of itself and on behalf of the government of Soviet Ukraine, declared that in the event of the start and during negotiations, the Red Army would not cross the front line it occupied: Drissa-Disna-Polotsk-Borisov-Parichi township-Ptich and Belokorovich stations-Chudnov township-town Pilyavy-town Derazhnya-Bar. The statement expressed the hope that all disputed issues would be resolved peacefully<sup>86</sup>. Thus, Soviet Russia sought to resolve controversial issues at the negotiating table and provide favorable conditions for the final defeat of the "white" armies.

In response to the Soviet statement of January 28, 1920, the Polish side announced the need to discuss it with the Entente. True, as early as January 26, England declared to Warsaw that it could not recommend Poland to continue the policy of war, since the RSFSR did not pose a military threat to Europe. On February 2, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR adopted an appeal to the Polish people, again repeating proposals to conclude peace with Poland. On February 22, the Ukrainian SSR also offered Poland to conclude Council of the Entente on February <sup>88</sup> a peace treaty, once again. Under these conditions, the Supreme <sup>24</sup> stated that, repeating its proposal on March 6, if Poland makes too excessive demands in negotiations with Moscow, then the Entente will not help her if Moscow refuses to peace. However, the Polish leadership, obsessed with the idea of restoring the borders of 1772 and confident in the military impotence of Soviet Russia, decided to delay diplomatic maneuvers as much as possible in order to create favorable conditions for military operations. Attempt

the Polish leadership to enlist the support of the Entente countries, Latvia and Romania did not lead to anything, 90 since they all took a wait-and-see attitude towards Polish intentions in the East

In February 1920, to the question of a correspondent of the newspaper *Eco de Paris*, "what is the policy of Mr. General in relation to Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine", Pilsudski stated with pathos that "the freedom of the lands occupied by us is the only decisive factor for me .. On bayonets we bring freedom to these unfortunate lands without any reservations . "91 Much more frankly, the goals of the Polish leadership were formulated in an information document for the command staff of the Volyn Front, prepared on the instructions of Pilsudski on March 1, 1920. It noted that "the head of state and the Polish government are in the position of unconditional weakening of Russia ... the government intends to support the national Ukrainian movement in order to create an independent Ukrainian state and in this way significantly weaken Russia, tearing away from it the most rich in grain and natural resources outskirts. The leading idea of creating an independent Ukraine **is the creation of a barrier between Poland and Russia** and the transition of Ukraine under Polish influence and thus ensuring the expansion of Poland, both economic - to create a market for itself, and political"92 . In particular, it was supposed to achieve the acquisition of Black Sea ports, which would allow Poland to take "such a position in relation to the Eastern European states, which is now occupied by the Western European states in relation to Poland ... Ports in the Baltic will be important when Poland simultaneously receives ports on the Black Sea"93 .

### On the eve of the fight

While the Polish government did everything possible to evade answering the Soviet peace proposals, the Polish command sought to create all the conditions for the offensive into the depths of Ukraine to pass without much difficulty. In order to deprive the Soviet command of the ability to transfer troops from north to south, it was decided to cut the Orsha-Zhlobin-Korosten-Zhitomir railroad, which connected the Western and Southwestern fronts. On March 5, 1920, the Polish troops of General V. Sikorsky launched an offensive and on March 6 occupied Mozyr and Kalinkovichi. The 57th Rifle Division, which opposed them in Polesie, numbered only 1375 bayonets with 25 light guns, stretched out on a 120-kilometer front. However, the capture of these points did not solve the main task set by the enemy, because the main reserves for the Western and Southwestern fronts were at that time coming from the center of the country and from the Caucasian front. Continuing the offensive, the Poles captured Rechitsa on March 8, but, having received reinforcements, in mid-March the 57th division returned the city and pushed the enemy back to Kalinkovichi. Later, for a month, the parties fought stubborn battles in this area, which allowed the Polish leadership to start a fuss in the press about the Soviet offensive that threatened the independence of Poland94 .

On March 6, Moscow addressed Warsaw with a note stating that the Polish government not only did not respond to Soviet peace proposals, but allowed new aggressive actions. The Soviet government stated that it hoped to receive an answer to its proposals95 . On March 27, 1920, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, S. Patek, informed Moscow of the consent of the Polish government on April 10 to start peace talks. The place of negotiations was the city of Borisov, which was located in the area of hostilities and was occupied by Polish troops.96 The truce proposed by Warsaw around Borisov allowed the Polish command to conduct an offensive in Ukraine and at the same time prevented Soviet Russia from launching retaliatory actions in Belarus. Therefore, on March 28, the Soviet government proposed that a general truce be concluded and that any other place away from the front line be chosen for negotiations . On April 1, the Polish government rejected Moscow's new proposals of April 2, Warsaw announced on April 7 that either negotiations would begin on April 17, 98 in Borisov, or they would not be at all just a diplomatic maneuver calculated on conditions that were obviously unacceptable for the RSFSR99 . Thus, all attempts by the Soviet government to establish peaceful . Thus it became clear that the Polish proposal was relations and resolve disputed issues through negotiations ended in failure. The Polish leadership regarded So the peace-loving proposals of the Soviet state as a sign of its weakness and relied on military force. A campaign in the Polish press describing the Soviet

offensive was backed up by an official statement from Warsaw on 20 April, in which Moscow was accused of deliberately delaying negotiations and launching a major offensive against Poland. In response, on April 23, Moscow naturally blamed Poland for the failure of the talks and offered Grodno or Bialystok as the venue for the talks . It is clear that the Polish leadership was no longer going to react to this proposal in any way. As an ally for the campaign to the East, Pilsudski, who appropriated himself the rank of marshal, decided to use S. Petliura,

ousted from Ukraine to Eastern Galicia occupied by Poland. Desperate for anyone's support, Petliura, in an agreement signed with Pilsudski on the night of April 22, agreed to the transfer of Volhynia to Poland, which guaranteed him control over the Ukrainian territories up to the line borders of 1772. On April 24, the Polish-Ukrainian military convention was signed, according to which 2 Ukrainian divisions were subordinate to the Polish High Command, and Polish troops in Ukraine got the opportunity to be supplied at the expense of an ally<sup>101</sup>.

The Polish command began to concentrate forces in Ukraine and Belarus at the end of 1919. d.102 The transfer of troops and military materials was carried out in strict secrecy. Yes, under the pretext lack of coal in Poland, passenger rail traffic was suspended for two weeks, and all transport was used for military transportation. January and February 1920 in Polish Eastern front arrived 41/2 new infantry divisions and 3 cavalry brigades, of which 3 were infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade were sent to the Ukrainian sector of the front. For the winter of 1919/20 the Polish army, which was on the Soviet front, was fully manned and well equipped. By April 1920, the Polish armed forces on the Eastern Front consisted of six armies (Table 3), the combat strength of which was determined at 148.4 thousand soldiers and officers. They were armed with 4,157 machine guns, 302 mortars, 894 artillery pieces, 49 armored vehicles and 51 aircraft, of which The reserve 11th Infantry Division consisted of 4.4 thousand soldiers and officers, 120 machine guns, 56 guns<sup>103</sup>.

**Table 3 Combat composition of Polish troops in the East**

<b>Fronts</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>Army Divisions, Brigades</b>
North	2nd Lithuanian-Belarusian, 10th Infantry Division, 13th Infantry Division	
East	1st 3rd, 8th, 17th, 1st Lithuanian-Belarusian Infantry Division, 1st KBR, Molodechno garrison	
	4th 2nd, 6th, 9th, 14th Infantry Division, 2nd KBR, Minsk garrison	
	3rd	Operational group Rydz-Smigly (1st, 7th PD, 3rd cbr), Operational group Rybak (1st gbr, 41st pp, 7th cbr), 4th PD, 1st KD
South East	2nd 13th, 15th, 2nd Ukrainian PD, Rovno garrison	
	6th 5th, 12th, 18th Infantry Division, 6th Lancers, Tarnopol garrison	

Soviet troops, completing the defeat of Denikin's armies in the spring of 1920, had on the Polish front with a length of about 1 thousand km. from Opochna to Mogilev-Podolsky limited forces (Table 4).

**Table 4**

<b>Fronts</b>	<b>Army Divisions, Brigades</b>
Western	15th 4th, 11th, 48th, 53rd, 56th SD, 164th SBR 55th SD, 15th KD
	16th 8th, 10th, 17th, 29th, 57th SD
	53rd border division
Southwestern	12th 7th, 44th, 47th, 58th SD, 17th KD
	14th 41st, 45th, 60th SD, 3rd KBR 17th KD, 1st Det. cbd

Although on the whole on the front the Polish troops only slightly outnumbered the Red Army, but on Ukraine, where the Polish command planned to strike the main blow, he managed to create a significant superiority over the armies of the Southwestern Front (Table 5). In addition, it should be remembered that the 41st the rifle division of the 14th army was deployed on the Dniester, and the 13th army fought against the troops of P.N. Wrangel, concentrated in the Crimea.

#### **Combat composition of the Red Army on the Polish front**

#### **The balance of forces on the Soviet-Polish front by April 20, 1920<sup>104</sup>**

**Table 5**

<b>Forces and facilities</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Red Army Troop</b>	<b>Polish Correlation</b>
Divisions: infantry cavalry	1	1 1/2	101/3
Personnel	169 260	1	1.1:1
Of these, machine gun fighters	88 952	1	1:1
	1671	158 364	1.1:1
		78 692	1.1:1
		2043	1:1.2

Guns and mortars	421	562	1:1.3
Armored trains	-	-	
Armored vehicles	38	18	2:1
Aircraft	-	22	

**Continuation of the table. 5****Forces and means****Red Army Troop Polish Correlation**

Ukraine		10	1	1.4
7 divisions: rifle cavalry	1 1/2	2 1/3	1	1.5
Personnel	55 033	142 074	1	2.6
Of these, fighters	19 750	65 345	1	3.3
Machine	1232	1994	1	1.6
guns Guns and mortars	236	588	1	2.5
Armored trains	8	-		
Armored cars Aircraft	-	31		
	24	29	1:1.2	

For its part, the Soviet leadership, faced with the inability to establish peaceful relations with Poland, could not but take into account the possibility of expanding hostilities. January 23, 1920 the commander of the Western Front warned the commander-in-chief "about the intention of the Poles to take large-scale operations against us in the near future" in the direction of Gomel, Mogilev, Orsha and Polotsk and asked to expedite the sending of replenishments. On January 25, the commander-in-chief set the task for the Western Front "stubbornly hold the front line" 105. In mid-February 1920, the head of the operational department headquarters of the Red Army B.M. Shaposhnikov prepared a report outlining a plan for a possible operation against Poland. Assuming that the Polish troops, probably in alliance with Latvia, will advance in Belorussia, Shaposhnikov proposed to concentrate 19 infantry and 5 cavalry divisions and deliver the main blow from the Drissa, Polotsk, Lepel area to the Vilna front—Lida. In addition, it was proposed to carry out a number of auxiliary strikes in Polesie and Volhynia. It was believed that this plan could be carried out after the concentration of troops not earlier than the end of April 1920.106

On February 23, the RVS of the Western Front sent V.I. Lenin a report in which Commander V.M. Gittis and member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front Yu.S. Unshlikht gave detailed data on the state of the armies of the Western Front and the grouping of enemy forces, reported on the strengthening Polish troops. The report reported on the measures taken by the command in the event of a Polish offensive. The Revolutionary Military Council of the Western Front asked to take timely measures to strengthen the troops of the front, without which **"the situation on the Western Front in the event of the transition of Polish troops to the offensive can quickly and become seriously complicated"**01. The Soviet leadership took seriously the request of the command Western Front, however, it did not have combat-ready reserves. Just after March

1920, the final defeat of the troops of Denikin and Kolchak was determined, it was possible to proceed to increase in forces on the Western Front. All the troops that had to be transferred to the Polish front, were at that time thousands of kilometers from the theater of operations - in Siberia, the Urals, Caucasus. Even if the transport was in good condition, the transportation of these troops to the front would require considerable time. However, the condition of the railroads during the Civil War was exceptionally heavy, so within a month and a half (from March 15 to May 1, 1920) arrived on the Western Front only 3 divisions of a two-brigade composition, and only 1 to the Polish sector of the South-Western Front rifle division. The rest of the troops were still on the way by the beginning of May.

Meanwhile, on March 10, the High Command of the Red Army considered options for the operation plan. against Polish troops. The idea of a strike from the Polotsk-Vitebsk-Lepel region, proposed by the RVS of the Western front, was rejected. Kamenev believed that while fighting continued in the area of Mozyr, South-Western the front must hold down the enemy and wait for the approach of the 1st Cavalry Army from the Caucasus, and the Western Front it was necessary to organize demonstrative actions near Polotsk and Mozyr and prepare the main blow in direction Igumen-Minsk. Moreover, in order to keep the preparation of the operation secret, the troops initially should have been concentrated in the area south of Vitebsk. April 6 RVS of the Western Front based on the course of the fighting near Mozyr, he proposed to deliver the main blow in the direction of Gomel-Minsk, but this idea did not find support in Moscow.



To support the troops of the Western Front, the command of the Southwestern Front on March 6 ordered: the 12th and 14th armies to intensify their operations and reach the line pp. Ptich, At the board - Novograd-Volynsky - Shepetovka - Proskurov - Solodkovtsy - Kamenetz - Podolsk. However, the fighting that began did not produce significant results, and on March 24, Soviet troops in Ukraine were ordered to go on the defensive. Meanwhile, the command of the Southwestern Front, busy fighting at Perekop, on March 14 proposed transferring the 12th and 14th armies to the Western Front. However, on March 18, the commander-in-chief replied that, although the main blow would be delivered by the Western Front, "nevertheless, your actions" will also "be decisive enough not to be considered only auxiliary." Upon the arrival of the 1st Cavalry Army, the main direction of the offensive of the Southwestern Front will be the Berdychev-Rovno line

Kovel-Brest. On March 23, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front submitted to the commander-in-chief a plan for the corresponding operation, which was approved by him on March 25. It was planned to start the operation after the occupation of the Crimea and the concentration of the necessary forces no earlier than the second half of May. However, the failure of the operation of the troops of the front to break into the Crimea called into question the implementation of this plan.

On April 8, the commander-in-chief warned the command of the Western and Southwestern Fronts that "Poland's latest response gives full reason to expect decisive offensive actions by the Poles in the coming days. It is essential that we be fully prepared to meet this offensive with an energetic counterattack. "If decisive offensive actions are not followed by the Poles in the coming days, the front must carry out concentration and preparation for the operations we have planned." On April 9, the commander of the Western Front ordered the RVS of the 15th and 16th armies to prepare plans for counterattacks in Belarus in case the Polish troops went on the offensive. On April 15, the command of the Southwestern Front ordered its troops to increase their combat readiness, and on April 17, the 1st Cavalry Army was ordered to move out of Rostov-on-Don and concentrate in the Berdichev-Vinnitsa region by June 1. On the same day, the commander of the Western Front gave the order to start concentrating divisions for an offensive operation towards Minsk. On April 17, 1920, Piłsudski, on April 17, 1920, approved the composition of the Polish armies

and groups intended to operate against the Soviet Southwestern Front, and ordered an offensive, the immediate goal of which was the capture of Kiev. It was believed that it was in Ukraine that the main forces of the Red Army were concentrated, the defeat of which would make it possible to launch a broad offensive in Belarus. The Polish command, in order to reach Kiev, expected to inflict a strong blow on the right flank of its 3rd army at the junction of the 12th and 14th Soviet armies, so that, breaking through to Zhitomir, Radomysl and Kazatin, to separate them, and the Rybak group was to break through the front 12 -th army from the north and, developing an offensive on Ovruch, Korosten and Malin, go to the rear of the 12th army, surround and destroy it within 5 days. It was believed that this would create favorable conditions for the capture of Kyiv and the defeat of the 14th Army. Almost 7 infantry and 2 cavalry divisions were allocated for the main attack, and three infantry divisions and cavalry were assigned to the Odessa direction. The decisive role in the operation was to be played by the newly formed and most numerous Polish 3rd Army, commanded by Piłsudski. The Polish command assigned a special role in this operation to the cavalry, which was supposed to break through to the rear of the Soviet troops in the region of Malin and Kazatin and cut off their escape routes to the east. True, such a detailed plan fettered the initiative of subordinate commanders .

The Soviet troops of the Southwestern Front (commander A.I. Egorov, RVS member R.I. Berzin) had to withstand the onslaught of a numerically superior, well-trained enemy. In addition, enemy agents were actively operating in the rear of the troops of the Southwestern Front, seeking to weaken the combat capability of the Soviet units. On the morning of April 23, the 2nd and 3rd Galician brigades, which were on the defensive in the sector of the 14th Army, raised an anti-Soviet revolt<sup>110</sup> . To eliminate it, the Soviet command was forced to use all the reserves of the 14th and part of the reserves of the 12th army. In addition, various insurgent detachments operated in the rear of the Southwestern Front, from rural self-defense to formations that acted under political or nationalist slogans. To combat them, the Soviet command had to allocate significant forces. For example, only 8 expeditionary detachments were sent from the 12th Army, 150-200 people each <sup>111</sup>. The campaign **against Kiev** Fierce battles broke out in. The

main blow was delivered by the enemy against the 12th Army, whose troops lost contact with the army headquarters by the evening of April 26. The Soviet units were forced to withdraw to avoid defeat.

On the left flank of the Polish South-Eastern Front, Rybak's group pushed the few units of the 47th Infantry Division to the south and occupied Ovruch by the evening of April 25. By the morning of April 27, the 7th Polish Cavalry Brigade captured Malin. On the left flank of the 2nd Army, on the night of April 25, Polish units pushed back small patrols of the 17th Soviet Cavalry Division, and Romer's combined cavalry division moved into this gap, which broke into Kazatin by the morning of April 27. It was believed that this would cut off the withdrawal of Soviet troops to Kyiv. On April 26, Polish troops from the Rydz-Smigly group captured Zhitomir, and the 4th Infantry Division entered Korosten. Having no other tasks, Rydz-Smigly decided to gain a foothold in the occupied area, and the 4th division, according to the plan, was transferred to the reserve of the main command and did not organize the pursuit of the retreating from the city

7th Infantry Division of the 12th Army.

However, the enemy's hopes for a quick defeat of the Red Army turned out to be unrealizable. The Poles did not have enough strength to create a stable encirclement front, which allowed the Soviet troops to retreat to the east with battles. Thus, the 7th Rifle Division of the 12th Army (commander A.G. Golikov, military commissar F.F.

Rogalev), flanked from the flanks in the Korosten region, lacked food and ammunition, covered itself with strong rear guards, systematically retreated from Korosten to Malin. Approaching the city, the 7th division, supported by 3 armored trains, attacked the Polish cavalry. The city changed hands several times, but on the night of April 28, the Soviet units pushed the enemy back north of Malin and opened their way out of the encirclement, having managed to take out 30 echelons with military equipment. In these battles, the division captured prisoners, 8 guns and 23 machine guns. For these actions, the 7th Rifle Division was awarded the honorary revolutionary Red Banner. The Polish infantry, pulled up to Malin, was forced to fight with the rearguards of the 7th division, retreating to Kyiv. Small groups of Polish troops preferred to move out of the way of the Soviet units, not getting involved in battles.

In the Zhitomir region, the enemy managed to cut into pieces and surround the 58th Infantry Division of the 12th Army, but, having organized, parts of the division dealt a strong blow to the enemy and left the encirclement, bypassing Kazatin occupied by the Poles from the north. Connecting with other units of the 12th Army, the division held back the enemy on the rivers Teterev, Zdvizh, Irpen and near Kiev. Although by the evening of April 27, the Poles occupied Berdichev, and on April 28 - Radomysl, their attempts to encircle the 12th Army on the way to the Teterev River were unsuccessful. On the front of the 2nd Army, the 15th Infantry Division pushed back parts of the 1st Galician Brigade and the 44th Infantry Division to the southeast. On April 27, one of the columns of the 44th division between Kazatin and Vinnitsa ran into the 13th infantry division of the enemy and was defeated by it, losing up to 3 thousand prisoners. The relatively planned withdrawal of the division was facilitated by the fact that the 13th Infantry Division went on the offensive according to the plan only on April 26th. The Soviet units bypassed Kazatin,

occupied by the Polish cavalry, from the south. On the

front of the 14th Soviet Army, all day on April 25, the 6th Polish Army passively watched the struggle of the Soviet and insurgent Galician units. When, on April 26, the Poles went on the offensive here, Galician brigades found themselves between them and the Soviet troops, now fighting on two fronts. In this situation, the Galicians began to surrender to both the Poles and the Soviet units. Accordingly, the 14th Army still did not experience the blows of the enemy and retreated in order to the southeast. On April 26, battles took place for Bar, which was defended by units of the 45th Infantry Division. Later, dealing only with the rearguards of the 14th Army, the Poles occupied Zhmerinka on April 28, and

Vinnitsa on April 29. Not having a clear idea of the situation at the front, on April 28, the Polish command decided to move the Rydz-Smigly group to the Pyaskovka-Stavishche-Vysokoye-Sharleyuvka front and occupy Fastov with cavalry.

The 2nd Army remained on the Galendra-Kazatin front. In fact, the Poles did not begin to develop their success for the complete defeat of the troops of the 12th Army. On April 29, the enemy managed to drive out detachments of the 58th Infantry Division from Stavische. On the evening of April 30, the Polish cavalry entered Fastov. On this day, Pilsudski, still cautious, ordered his troops to occupy the Yaruga-Nemirov-Lipovets-Skvira-Zhidovtsy-Brusilov-Stavishche-Peskovka front, while Romer's cavalry division was to occupy the Belaya Tserkovka. The Poles reached this line on May 2-3, having small skirmishes with the Soviet units.

In the conditions of the enemy breaking through the front, the command of the Southwestern Front on April 27 determined the main task - to hold the Kiev region and, by defending on a wide front, gain time before the 1st Cavalry Army approaches from the North Caucasus, exhaust the enemy, force him to disperse his forces over a vast area and thereby creating favorable conditions for the transition of Soviet troops to the counteroffensive "2. In the meantime, on May 1, by order of the command, the troops of the Southwestern Front went over to

passive defense "3. This was also facilitated by the fact that on April 29 - May 3, the Polish offensive slowed down, which, on the one hand, was due to the need to change the grouping of troops, and on the other, reflected the hesitation of the Polish command in choosing the next target: Kiev or defeat 14th Army As a result, it was decided to finish off the Soviet 12th Army on the outskirts of Kiev and take the city.

On the night of May 6, Polish troops launched an offensive against the formations of the 12th Army, which were defending Kyiv. Having no strength to hold the city, the 12th Army left Kyiv on the same day and retreated to the eastern bank of the Dnieper. On May 8–9, Polish troops captured a bridgehead on the left bank of the Dnieper near Kiev, and the attempts of the 12th Army to push the enemy back across the river failed . . At the same time, the enemy continued to press units of the 14th Army, which also offered stubborn resistance, repeatedly going over to counterattacks. Although the enemy continued to advance deep into Ukraine, the Soviet 12th and 14th armies, which suffered significant losses, were all defeated and saved the front. In the course of battles and partly from disease, the Polish army, according to official data from the Polish High Command, lost during April 1920 190 officers and 13,700 soldiers'15 . The stubborn resistance of the Soviet troops and their withdrawal to Kyiv and Odessa in divergent directions forced the enemy's strike force to disperse its forces, stretching the front of the offensive.

The counterattacks of the 12th Army on the eastern bank of the Dnieper, the preservation of a stable front by Soviet troops, the enemy's lack of reserves for the development of a further offensive, and the offensive of the troops of the Western Front in Belarus led to the gradual stabilization of the front, which took shape by May 15-16. The Polish command failed to achieve decisive successes and destroy the 12th and 14th armies in parts. The Polish strike group was significantly weakened due to heavy losses and dispersal of troops on a wide front. As Yu. Pilsudsky admitted on May 15, "we hit the air with our fist - we traveled a long distance, but we didn't destroy the enemy's manpower."6 even the few divisions that opposed them. Instead of launching an offensive with the left wing immediately south of Pripjat and trying to cut off the Bolshevik forces from the bridges at Kiev, the offensive proceeded almost frontally, through Kazatin and Berdichev, directly on Kiev. The Soviet detachments quickly broke away and crossed on the eastern bank of the Dnieper ... The Polish offensive hit an empty spot without inflicting serious losses on the enemy "7 . As a result of an organized withdrawal, the troops of the Southwestern Front got out of the attack, which, along with the expansion of the front line, led to the disruption of the enemy's plan, pinned down his main forces and allowed the troops of the Western Front to prepare for the offensive "8. In the occupied regions of Ukraine, the

invaders robbed the population, they burned entire villages, shot and hanged innocent citizens. Captured Red Army soldiers were subjected to torture and humiliation. In the city of Rovno, the invaders shot more than 3 thousand civilians. The robbery

of Ukraine, covered by references to an agreement with Petliura on supplying Polish troops, was accompanied by terror and violence: corporal punishment of peasants during requisitions, arrests and executions of Soviet employees in cities, confiscation of property and Jewish pogroms. For the refusal of the population to give food to the invaders, the villages of Ivanovtsy, Kucha, Sobachy, Yablunovka, Novaya Greblya, Melnichi, Kirillovka and other residents were completely burned these villages were shot down with machine guns. In the town of Tetievo, during the Jewish pogrom, 4,000 people were slaughtered. Due to the operational importance of the lines of communication, local railway workers were particularly affected. Many of them were arrested and shot on charges of sabotage, others were fired,

deprived of their homes and property. Ukrainian newspapers wrote about civilian casualties. **"On May 4, 290 wounded were delivered to Cherkassy from cities and towns occupied by the Poles, one of the reports said, " women and children. There are children aged from one to two years... The wounds were**

**inflicted with cold steel."** On May 29, 1920, the governments of the RSFSR and Soviet Ukraine addressed the governments of England, France, the USA and Italy with a special note in which they protested against the atrocities of the Polish invaders. The note cited a number of facts testifying to the barbaric behavior of the Polish occupiers in Ukraine. Protesting against the violence of the Polish troops, the Soviet governments of Russia and Ukraine noted that the governments of the Entente countries were respo

The start of a broad Polish offensive in Ukraine and the capture of Kyiv led to significant changes in the strategy of Soviet Russia. Naturally, the Polish front became the main one for Moscow, and the war with Poland became the "central task"<sup>120</sup>. The Soviet leadership undertook a number of diplomatic and propaganda measures to show that the Entente countries patronized Poland and win the sympathy of working people in Western countries. On May 23, the theses of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) **"The Polish Front and Our Tasks"** were published, in which it was stated that the war with Poland had become the most important matter of the country. Moreover, the events of April-May 1920 led to a certain national unity in the country split by the civil war. Already on May 1, General A.A. Brusilov turned to the Soviet authorities with a proposal to support the Red Army in the battles with Poland, for which, in his opinion, "the first measure should be the excitation of people's patriotism, without which there will be no strong combat capability of the army." On May 2, the RVSR decided to create under the commander-in-chief a "special meeting on the issues of increasing forces and means to combat the offensive of the Polish counter-revolution" headed by Brusilov<sup>122</sup>.

On May 7, a special meeting published an **"Appeal to all former officers, wherever they may be"**, which, in particular, stated: **"At this critical, historical moment in our national life, we, your senior comrades in arms, appeal to your feelings of love and devotion to the Motherland and we appeal to you with an urgent request to forget all insults, no matter who and wherever they inflicted on you, and voluntarily go with complete selflessness and hunting to the Red Army to the front or to the rear, wherever the government of Soviet Workers 'and Peasants' Russia takes you no appointment, and to serve there not out of fear, but out of conscience, so that by his honest service, not sparing life, to defend at all costs Russia dear to us and not allow her to be plundered, because in the latter case she can irretrievably disappear, and then our descendants will justly curse us and rightly blame us for the fact that, due to selfish feelings of the class struggle, we did not use our combat knowledge and experience, forgot our native Russian people and ruined our Mother Russia"**<sup>123</sup>. At the same time, the Central Committee of the RCP(b) pointed out to newspaper editors that "in articles about Poland and the Polish war it is necessary to exclude in the strictest possible way possible deviations towards nationalism and chauvinism"<sup>124</sup>. It is possible that it was this order that led to the establishment in Soviet literature of such clichés as "pan Polak".

Apparently, a kind of compromise between the correct line in propaganda and an attempt to unite all possible forces to repulse the Poles was the following assessment of the war published in May 1920 in the journal *Voyennoye Delo*: "Poland with this war only contributes to the recovery of Russia. Let this war be "civil" for some from the point of view of the ideals of socialism, for others it is "a war for the inviolability, for the integrity of Russia", a war for the honor of the "Russian flag", that is, in its purest form, defense against external enemies. Here Russia will find a path to unity: a non-party and a communist, a patriot and a sincere member of the International from the heart can lend a hand to each other for joint efforts in the coming struggle. The same idea was carried out in the "Review of the Red Army's Combat Actions in May 1920": **"Spring has come, and, despite the incredibly difficult winter campaigns and brilliant victories of the Red Army, its weapons are again exposed in the west, where continuous cannonade thunders and the age-old dispute with the Poles is resolved. A few more months of efforts by the red fighters of Rus' are needed to end the cycle of flaming wars of the 20th century! War trumpets rattle all over Russia, calling the fighters to the last "mortal" battle with the Poles! Hey, Rus, forward to defend your "age-old" rights—stand as one against the enemy!"**<sup>26</sup>. The registration of former tsarist officers in the Red Army began. Many contemporaries were convinced that it was the Bolshevik leadership that really defended the interests of Russia, albeit under

new slogans. At the end of April 1920, a meeting was held at the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, at which the strategic plan of military operations of the Red Army was discussed. After considering various options, prepared

the final draft of the campaign plan, which on April 28 was approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP (b). It was envisaged that the main blow would be delivered by the troops of the Western Front in Belarus. The Southwestern Front was to deliver an auxiliary blow in the general direction of Rovno-Brest. It was planned that the close interaction of the fronts would solve the main task - to defeat the main enemy forces in the Warsaw direction. For this, it was decided to strengthen the Southwestern Front with additional forces, including the transfer of the 1st Cavalry Army here from the Caucasus. However, any active actions of the Red Army were limited by the speed of concentration of reinforcements. The organization of the transfer of an army of many thousands from the North Caucasus to Ukraine caused a lot of controversy about the method of its redeployment: either by rail or by horseback. On this score, different points of view were expressed in the Field Headquarters of the Revolutionary Military Council and in the High Command.

Head of the Field Headquarters of the RVS of the Republic P.P. Lebedev and the head of the operational department of the headquarters B.M. Shaposhnikov insisted that the 1st Cavalry Army be transported to Ukraine by rail. The command of the 1st Cavalry Army sharply objected to this, fearing that due to the ruined state of the railway transport, transportation could be disrupted. In addition, during transportation by rail, there were great difficulties in supplying it with food and water. As a result, disputes were resolved in favor of organizing a horse march. Considering the general situation, the Soviet command decided not to wait for the concentration of troops in Ukraine and to launch an offensive in Belarus on May 14. **The May operation of the Western Front** As a result of the

measures taken to strengthen the

Western Front, from March 10 to June 1, 1920, more than 40,000 reinforcements arrived there, of which about 8,000 were poured into units of the 15th Army, and about 18,000 men - in the 16th army. The rest were sent to the spare parts of the front. To replenish the combat units, the rear facilities of the Western Front were reduced by

5 thousand people. The range of transportation, as well as the poor condition of railway transport, made it difficult to replenish and supply the troops of the Western Front, but by May 14 it was possible to complete the transfer of the 29th,

56th, 4th, 18th rifle and 15th cavalry divisions. The 6th, 12th and 21st rifle divisions became part of the Western Front after the start of the May offensive<sup>127</sup>. All the main forces of military aviation were sent to the Polish front, which at that time was not so much. By the beginning of May 1920, 22 aviation detachments had arrived on the Western Front, and another 9 were expected to arrive.

By the beginning of the offensive, stocks of ammunition were created, which made it possible to allocate an average of 180 rifle cartridges for each soldier and up to 400 shells for each gun. 10.4 thousand pounds of gasoline for aircraft were delivered to the front, which, due to the lack of fuel, were previously used in extreme cases. Not all that was allocated to the troops of the front managed to arrive before the start of the offensive. So, there were not enough shoes, underwear and overcoats. The lack of provision of headquarters and troops with means of communication later affected the course of the operation. During April, it was possible to increase the number of horses in the troops and institutions of the front from 25.6 thousand to 35 thousand, carts - from 7.7 thousand to 9.1 thousand. But by the start of the offensive, army transport was not yet fully prepared

to provide major offensive. Initially, the operational plan for the offensive of the troops of the Western Front provided for the main attack by the forces of the 16th Army in the direction of Igumen-Minsk. An auxiliary strike was to be delivered by the 15th Army, operating north of the 16th Army. In accordance with this plan, the main forces of the front were concentrated in the area of the 16th Army. All 40 heavy special-purpose artillery guns, almost all aviation and technical means of communication were brought here. The bulk of the incoming reinforcements were sent to the same army. However, the implementation of this plan encountered a number of significant difficulties. The troops of the 16th Army, operating in the direction of the main attack, had to begin hostilities by forcing the Berezina River, the western bank of which the enemy had heavily fortified. The lack of sufficient technical means for crossing the Berezina raised fears about the possibility of a rapid build-up of forces on the bridgehead, which would lead to a delay in the development of the offensive. In addition, the enemy in this direction had the opportunity to launch flank counterattacks from Borisov and Bobruisk against the main strike force of the Soviet troops. A serious obstacle was also wooded and swampy terrain and impassability. Under these conditions, the movement of artillery and transport would be very difficult.

On April 29, M.N. took command of the Western Front. Tukhachevsky, who replaced V.M. Gittis. Knowing about the strategic plans of the operational directorate of the Headquarters of the Red Army of February 1920 and about the directive of the command of the Western Front of April 14, which provided for in the event of an enemy going on the offensive "to strike him with a quick and energetic counterattack with the left flank of the 15th Army from the Polotsk Vitebsk region to in the direction of Dokshitsy-Molodechno"<sup>128</sup>, the new commander made changes to the plan of operation. The main blow was now to be delivered by the 15th Army in the general direction of Vilna, the

auxiliary - by the 16th Army in the Minsk direction. The right-flank units of the 15th Army, allocated to a special Northern group under the command of E.N. Sergeev, were supposed to force the Dvina River in the Disna-Polotsk area and subsequently strike at the rear of the enemy, in the direction of the Zagat'e station<sup>129</sup>. Although this version of the plan was more successful, its change on the eve of the offensive seriously hampered the course of the operation.

It was necessary to carry out a significant regrouping of forces and means from the center of the front to its right flank, which took quite a long time. Difficulties with transport, as well as lack of due leadership from the front headquarters led to the fact that the regrouping of forces to the designated operation has not been fully completed. In addition, the operation plan was designed to maintain non-stop offensive without any reserves. On the eve of the offensive, the front command issued an order requiring army commanders to use all divisions in the offensive, not allocating nothing for the army reserve<sup>130</sup>. The short time allotted for the preparation of the offensive Western Front, did not allow to fully concentrate all human forces and logistical funds for this operation. However, in order to alleviate the situation of the troops of the Southwestern front, it was necessary to go on the offensive as quickly as possible. Thus, shortcomings in planning and preparation of the offensive by the command of the Western Front inevitably had to affect the course of hostilities.

On preparations for an offensive on the Western Front through military and undercover intelligence became known to the Polish command, which decided to disrupt the offensive of the Red Army in Belarus. Initially, the Polish command intended to strike with the 1st Army from Polotsk, and the 4th Army from Borisov to Vitebsk and Orsha. But, having received information from intelligence about the preparations for the Red offensive, on May 11 at a meeting in Kalinkovichy, Pilsudski ordered the commander

The 4th Polish Army to prepare a counterattack with the forces of three infantry divisions on Zhlobin. When success, the 4th Polish Army was to capture Mogilev. It was planned to reinforce this army with the 4th Infantry division of the Ukrainian Front, which received an order to move to the 4th Army area. According to Piłsudski, he had the intention to launch an offensive on May 17 immediately on both flanks: from Polissya by the forces of the 4th Army and from the side of Lepel by the troops of the 1st Army. However, all calculations of the Polish commands were disrupted by the outbreak

On May 14, the offensive of the Red Army in Belarus<sup>131</sup>.

**Table 6 Combat composition of the Western Front on May 15, 1920**

<b>Army</b>	<b>Divisions, brigades</b>
Northern group	48th, 18th SD, 164th brigade 55th SD
15th	4th, 6th, 11th, 29th, 53rd, 56th SD, 15th KD
16th	8th, 10th, 17th, 57th SD

**Table 7 Combat composition of Polish troops in Belarus**

**Army Divisions, Brigades**

1st	3rd, 8th, 10th, 1st Lithuanian-Belarusian Infantry Division, 1st, 2nd KBR
4th	2nd, 9th, 14th PD, 12th PBR 6th PD, KBR
Reserve	16th, 17th PD

By the beginning of the offensive, the troops of the Western Front (see Table 6) were located as follows. The northern group of troops occupied the line: Opochka-Disna (west of Polotsk)-Yanopolye (8 km northwest of Vitebsk). South of it was the 15th Army (commander - A.I. Kork, member of the Revolutionary Military Council - N.S. Tikhmenev). Its front ran from Yanopol to an area 15 km southeast of the city of Lepel. Next on units of the 16th Army operated on the eastern bank of the Berezina (commander - N.V. Sollogub, member of the Revolutionary Military Council - A.E. Dauman). Its left flank was in the area of the city of Rechitsa. Judging by the data in Table. 8, Soviet the command managed to create a significant superiority in forces over the enemy. Now it all depended from the ability to command the front to organize an offensive.

**Table 8 Balance of forces by May 15, 1920**

<b>Forces</b>	<b>Western Front Enemy Ratio</b>		
Fighters	131674	67645	1.9:1
Machine	3036	1553	1.9:1
guns Guns and mortars	706	481	1.5:1
Armored	19	18	1:1
vehicles Aircraft	71	20	3.5:1

Early in the morning of May 14, 1920, the 15th Army and units of the Northern Group went on the offensive. 16th army was able to launch an offensive that day, because she did not complete the regrouping of units. Hiding behind natural obstacle formed by the Berezina and its tributaries with their swampy valley, the 8th and 1st

Polish infantry divisions put up stubborn resistance, especially in the area of Polotsk and Lepel. But the enemy could not resist. After stubborn fighting, his defenses were broken through. The troops of the 15th Army already on the first day of the offensive advanced 6–20 km and liberated Lepel, in the battles for which the 43rd regiment of the 5th rifle division

under the command of V.I. Chuikov. Having suffered a defeat, enemy units began to retreat to Sventsyany, Molodechno. By the end of May 16, the main forces of the 15th Army, advancing in a northwestern direction, reached the Disna-Zyabki line. Maneuvering troops in a wooded and swampy area, the command of the Western Front on May 17 changed the direction of the attack of the Northern Group from the southwest to the northwest, and the 15th Army - from the northwest to the southwest. As a result of this, the troops of the 15th Army and the Northern Group began to spread along the front in three directions, 50-70 km apart from each other. In addition, in 5 days the offensive front of the 15th Army expanded from 60 to 110 km.

The enemy took advantage of the slowdown in the advance of the Soviet troops and organized a systematic withdrawal of their units and pulled up reserves. The Polish command also took advantage of the fact that the 16th Army went on the offensive only on May 19, when the strength of the 15th Army's strikes began to weaken significantly, and its offensive fizzled out. The 16th Army was advancing with only two divisions, which were located 80 km from the left-flank units of the 15th Army. By the end of May 23, Soviet troops captured a bridgehead on the western bank of the Berezina, which had 40 km along the front and 60 km in depth, and liberated the city of Igumen. On May 24-26, the Polish units launched a counterattack and drove back units of the 8th Infantry Division beyond the Berezina. At the same time, the attempts of the 21st and 17th Rifle Divisions to seize the bridgehead southeast of Borisov, which was liberated on May 25, were repulsed. To develop success, fresh forces had to be brought in. However, at that time there were no reserves either in the armies or at the disposal of the front command. The 21st Rifle Division entered the battle only on May 26, when the situation on the Western Front deteriorated significantly and it could no longer

significantly affect the situation. In addition, due to the lack of communication between the command and rear institutions of the front and armies, as well as due to the lack of convoys, the regular supply of ammunition was disrupted. Meanwhile, the Polish command was hastily pulling up reserves, reinforcing its troops in front of the Western Front. 1.5 divisions were transferred from the center of the country and 2.5 from the Ukrainian sector of the front. The approach of fresh forces allowed the enemy to

On May 30, stop the further advance of the troops of the Western Front. During the 17 days of the offensive, units of the 15th Army advanced only 110-130 km. To

restore the lost positions, the Polish command created shock groups of troops. On the Reserve Army (8th, 10th, 11th infantry divisions, brigade

5th Infantry Division, 7th Reserve and 1st Cavalry Brigade under the command of General K. Sosnkovskiy). In the direction of Molodechno-Glubokoye, another strike group was prepared, consisting of the 3rd,

17th, 1st Lithuanian-Belarusian infantry divisions and brigade of the 6th infantry division. In the Zembina area, the third strike group was located - the 15th Infantry Division and a brigade of the 4th Infantry Division under the command of General Skersky. The plan of the Polish command was to encircle the troops of the 15th Army, which had advanced to the Molodechno region, with a blow from the Reserve Army and push them back into the impassable region of the Upper Berezina. The counterattack of the enemy troops began on May 31. Parts of the Western Front put up fierce resistance to the enemy. The troops of the Northern Group and the right flank of the 15th Army especially distinguished themselves in these battles. Their perseverance, steadfastness and courage frustrated the enemy's plans - to break through the battle formations and go to the rear of the main forces of the 15th Army. As A. Przybylsky noted, "the conceived operation in fact gave only partial results. The reserve army met decisive resistance from the right wing of the 15th Soviet Army and the Northern Group and was unable to reach the rear of the Soviet troops fighting near Molodechno in time.

The Polish plan to encircle and destroy the troops of the 15th Army failed. However, the armies of the Western Front, finding themselves without reserves and ammunition, exhausted and, moreover, poorly controlled by the command and headquarters of the front, were forced to withdraw with heavy fighting under the onslaught of superior enemy forces. Only units of the 15th Army lost 12,132 people 134 killed, wounded and missing. By June 8, 1920

they were thrown back 60-100 km to the Uzmena-Berezino-R. line. Berezina, where the front has stabilized. Thus, during the period from June 1 to June 8, the enemy pushed back parts of the Western Front almost to their original lines. Only in the Polotsk region did Soviet troops hold a bridgehead on the left bank of the Western Dvina.

So the May offensive operation of the Western Front ended unsuccessfully. Underestimating the enemy and overestimating their own strength, the command of the Western Front, faced with the need to support the troops of the Southwestern Front, launched an offensive without completing preparations and without organizing interaction between the 15th and 16th armies. Due to the poor organization of communications, command and control of the troops was lost, which led to their dispersal in different directions. All this allowed the Polish troops not only to avoid defeat, but also to counterattack and push back parts of the Western Front. However, the May offensive of the Red Army in Belarus still had a certain positive value. It was possible to disrupt the plans of the Polish command for an offensive in Belarus, and the area occupied by Soviet troops on the left bank of the Western Dvina could be used as a springboard for preparing a new offensive for the Red Army. The May offensive of the Soviet troops in Belarus forced the Polish command to use up a significant part of its reserves and transfer part of the troops from the South-Eastern Front to the north, which weakened its strike force in Ukraine and forced it to abandon new operations in this direction. All this made it easier for the troops of the Southwestern Front to go over to the offensive. **Counterattack in the Ukraine** As already noted, as early as April 26, the

Politburo decided to

transfer part of the troops from the Caucasian Front to the Southwestern Front and speed up the transportation of spare parts<sup>136</sup>. In May 1920, the Southwestern Front received more than 41,000 reinforcements. At the same time, the 1st Cavalry Army (commander S.M. Budyonny, members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the army K.E. Voroshilov and E.A. Shchadenko) was transferred to the Southwestern Front from the North Caucasus. The cavalry made a thousand-kilometer march in cavalry along the route: Maykop - Rostov-on-Don - Yekaterinoslav - Uman. During the transition, units of the 1st Cavalry Army defeated many insurgent and anti-Soviet detachments operating in the rear of the troops of the Southwestern Front. On May 25, the cavalry concentrated in the Uman region. By this time, it consisted of four cavalry divisions and one special purpose regiment and consisted of 17,930 fighters, 362 machine guns and 48 artillery pieces. The 1st Cavalry Army had extensive combat experience, and its appearance on the Southwestern Front strengthened the offensive strike force of the Soviet troops in Ukraine.

On May 29, the transportation to Ukraine of the 25th Chapaev division (commander I.S. Kutyaev) began, which was one of the strongest in the Red Army: at the end of May, it had more than 1.0 thousand bayonets and 3 thousand sabers, 364 easel and 175 light machine guns, 52 guns<sup>137</sup>. In terms of its numbers, it was in no way inferior at that moment to the 12th or 14th armies of the Southwestern Front. In April 1920, the Bashkir Cavalry Brigade under the command of M. Murtazin and other units arrived from the Urals on the Southwestern Front. In addition, from April 15 to August 3, 1920, over 23 thousand rifles, 586 machine guns, 59 guns, more than 10.5 thousand checkers, 46 aircraft, about 36 million rifle cartridges and over 110 thousand sets of Red Army uniforms<sup>138</sup>. To clear the rear of the Southwestern Front from various insurgent detachments and gangs, F.E. Dzerzhinsky. 1,400 security officers and fighters of the internal security forces who arrived with him, together with party organizations and the local population in the spring and summer of 1920, were able to eliminate many enemy agents on the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. Thanks to this, the security of the rear of the Southwestern Front was ensured, which was one of the important conditions for the successful solution of the tasks assigned to it. On May 26, the Central Committee of the RCP (b) appointed I.V. Stalin was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front.

The situation that developed for the Red Army at the end of May 1920 on the Polish sector of the Southwestern Front required an early transition to the counteroffensive. The enemy was not yet able to firmly gain a foothold in the occupied positions in Ukraine and did not put his units in order, which suffered losses and were tired during the attack on Kyiv. Moreover, the transfer of several divisions from Ukraine to Belarus seriously weakened the grouping of Polish troops on the South-Eastern Front. Favorable for the Red Army was the fact that the enemy used up a significant part of his reserves to parry the blow of the Western Front.

The counteroffensive plan of the Southwestern Front was determined in the first half of May 1920. According to the directive of the High Command of May 8, the troops of the Southwestern Front were assigned the following tasks. The 12th Army was supposed to liberate Kyiv. To do this, the right-flank units of the 12th Army, gathered into a fist, were to cross the Dnieper River and advance in a south-western direction, going to the rear of the Kiev grouping of Polish troops. The 58th Rifle Division advanced on Kyiv from the east. The 14th Army, inflicting the main blow on its right flank, was supposed to put the enemy units under the flank attack of the 1st Cavalry Army, and with the left flank units to pin down the enemy troops operating in the Odessa direction. Under these conditions, for the 1st Cavalry Army, according to the plan of the commander-in-



the possibility, acting in the interval between the Kiev and Odessa groupings of Polish troops, with a blow to the flank and rear, to break one of these groupings, depending on the situation<sup>139</sup>. The development of a more detailed plan for the counteroffensive of the Southwestern Front took place with the participation of Commander-in-Chief S.S. Kamenev on May 12-15 in Kharkov at the headquarters of the front. It was decided to break through the front of Polish troops in Ukraine with the 1st Cavalry Army, initially concentrating the efforts of the Soviet troops of the Southwestern Front against the Kyiv, and then against the Odessa grouping of the enemy. In accordance with this plan, the command of the Southwestern Front on May 19

issued the first order to the troops of the 14th and 1st Cavalry Army on the grouping of troops **and** the upcoming offensive. The cavalry army was ordered to turn around on the Tal-noe-Uman-Teplik line no later than May 24. On May 23, the front command signed a directive stating that "the main task of the armies of the Southwestern Front is to defeat and destroy the Polish army in Ukraine. Taking advantage of the disunity of the above-mentioned enemy groups and considering that its main forces are concentrated in the Kiev region, which is at the same time the most important politically, it was decided to deliver the main blow to the Kyiv enemy group.

The 12th Army (commander - S.A. Mezheninov, and from June 10, 1920 - G.K. Voskanov, member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army - S.I. Aralov) had the task of leaving cover in front of the front of the 3rd Polish Army to the east Kiev, with the main forces to cross the Dnieper River north of Kiev and advance in the direction of Teterev and Borodyanka in order to prevent the withdrawal of the 3rd Polish Army to the north and northwest, and then, together with the 1st Cavalry Army, encircle its troops in area of Kiev. The Fastov group of troops (commander of the division commander of the 45th rifle division I.E. Yakir) was ordered to go on a decisive offensive in the direction of Belaya Tserkov and Fastov. In addition, the Southern Group of the Dnieper Flotilla under the command of P.I. Pashkin. At dawn on May 27, the 1st Cavalry Army was to go on a decisive offensive, strike at the junction between the Kiev and Odessa groupings of Polish troops and, no later than June 1, take Kazatin and Berdichev, and subsequently, hiding behind Starokonstantinov and Shepetovka, strike behind enemy lines. The 14th Army (commander I.P. Ubovich, members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army - N.P. Gorbunov, M.L. Rukhimovich) was entrusted with ensuring the success of the 1st Cavalry Army from the south and southwest and capturing Vinnitsa no later than July 1 and Zhmerinka<sup>141</sup>. **Table 9 Combat composition of the Southwestern Front by June 2, 1920 142 Divisions, brigades of the Army** Detachment of the Chernigov Provincial Military Commissariat, expeditionary detachment N ° 1, 7th, 25th, 58th SD, Bashkir kbr

12th	
Fastovskaya group	44th, 45th SD, 1st division. cbr, Cherkasy garrison
1st Cavalry	4th, 6th, 11th, 14th KD, checkpoint
14th	Osnaz 41st, 60th SD, 21st brigade 7th SD, 63rd brigade 21st SD, 8th

KD **Table 10 Combat strength of Polish troops in Ukraine**<sup>143</sup> 3rd

Army	Divisions, brigades
	Rybak group, 1st, 6th Ukrainian PD, 7th cbr 2nd (until 28.05) 7th, 13th, PD, 1st KD 6th 12th, 18- I, Ukrainian PD, 10th PBR 5th PD

Soviet troops in the Ukraine were opposed by three Polish armies and, in addition, Petliur's units. The 3rd Polish Army was located in the Kyiv region. At the front from Belaya Tserkov to Lipovets acted

The 2nd army of the enemy, disbanded on May 28 and transferred the 7th infantry and 1st cavalry divisions to the 3rd, and the 13th infantry division to the 6th armies. In the area Lipovets-Gaisin-r. Olshenka to the Dniester was the 6th Army, which, in addition to the Polish units, included the Petliurist army and the detachments of Ataman Kurovsky, operating on the Pyatigora-Zhivotovo-Oratovo-Lobachev front. In addition, in the Chernobyl region, a detachment of S. Bulak Balakhovich acted against the right flank of the Soviet 12th Army. **Table 11 Balance of Forces as of May 26, 1920**

1440 machine guns	1 897	1:1.3
245 guns An analysis	412	1:1.7

of the correlation of forces of the opposing sides shows that, although the Soviet troops as a whole were inferior to the enemy in numbers by more than one and a half times (78 thousand bayonets and sabers against 46.4 thousand), they had a decisive superiority in cavalry. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the Polish troops were stretched along the front, in an effort to cover the main directions with the so-called "cordons". This significantly reduced their mobility and left the Polish command in Ukraine practically without significant reserves. While the presence of the Southwestern Front of the 1st Cavalry Army, which was essentially the most formidable mobile strike force capable of solving major operational and strategic tasks in the offensive, gave hope for the success of the planned offensive operation of the Red Army in Ukraine.

The counteroffensive of the Soviet troops of the Southwestern Front was scheduled for May 26, 1920. However, on this day, in fact, only the 14th Army and the Fastovskaya Group went on the offensive. By this time, the 12th Army had not yet completed the regrouping of its troops and the preparation of the crossing across the Dnieper. On May 27, attempts by small groups of this army to cross the Dnieper in the Strakholesye region (north of Kyiv) were unsuccessful. The enemy from the opposite bank of the river and from motor boats met groups of Soviet fighters with strong rifle and machine-gun fire. Subdivisions

The 12th Army was forced to stop crossing the Dnieper and return to its original position. In the following days, the troops of the 12th Army launched a frontal attack on Kyiv. However, the enemy offered fierce resistance. The attacks of the Soviet troops were unsuccessful. The fighting in the sector of the Fastovskaya group and the 14th Army took on a fierce character from the very first day. Parts of the Fastovskaya group, rapidly attacking the enemy, broke through the front in the area east of the White Church. However, the Poles, having gathered significant forces, launched a counterattack on the night of May 30. The dispersal of the troops of the Fastovskaya group on a wide front and the lack of reserves led to the fact that it could not withstand the onslaught and by June 2 was pushed back to its original positions. The 14th Army did not achieve significant success these days either. On May 26, the 1st Cavalry Army began to advance to its original position. On her way, she had to fight with the rebel detachments

of Kurovsky. So, on May 28, the 4th cavalry division in the Pyatigor area defeated the so-called Zaporizhzhya rebel regiment. Prisoners, machine guns and a large number of cartridges were captured. On the same day, the battles of the Soviet cavalry with the Polish troops unfolded. They were stubbornly resisted by the 13th Infantry Division, located in the Samgorodok-Lipovets area. By the evening of May 28, the armored trains of the 1st Cavalry Army, having pushed back the enemy armored trains, occupied the Lipovets station. The offensive of the 1st Cavalry Army was carried out on a front 40 km long. The 4th, 6th and 11th cavalry divisions operated in the first line, and the 14th cavalry division acted in the second echelon. On May 29, the 4th Cavalry Division, led by division commander D.D. Korotchaev and Commissioner V.I. Berlov attacked the enemy cavalry, forcing it to withdraw. At the same time, she drove out the Polish infantry units from Novo-Fastov. In the afternoon, parts of this division began a battle for the town of Dzinkov. This fight was very stubborn and dragged on until late at night. At the same time, in another sector, the 6th cavalry division (chief division commander S.K. Timoshenko, commissar P.V. Bakhturov) defeated the 2nd battalion of the 50th regiment and one artillery battery of the 13th enemy division in the area between the town of Zhivotov and Verbovka village. The fighting continued and became more stubborn and fierce. On May 30, the enemy brought fresh units into the battle. Due to the fact that the forces of the 1st Cavalry Army were dispersed over a wide front and the actions of the divisions were poorly coordinated, the enemy managed to drive the Soviet troops out of Novo Fastov and Lipovets. Subsequent attempts by the 1st Cavalry Army

to break through the enemy defenses were unsuccessful. Separate units of the 1st Cavalry Army tried to defeat the strongholds of enemy resistance in the region of Pogrebishchi and Lipovets with a frontal attack. Here they suffered significant losses, but they did not succeed in taking the settlements. During the stubborn battles on May 31, 3 squadrons of the 81st regiment of the 14th cavalry division, which consisted mainly of the Don Cossacks of the former Denikin's army, went over to the side of the Poles. On June 1, a counter battle took place between the 1st Polish cavalry division and the 4th and 14th cavalry divisions of the 1st Cavalry Army, which managed to beat and push the enemy cavalry to the north.

Although the battles that unfolded did not produce significant results, they enabled the front and army command to determine more clearly the enemy's defenses and the grouping of his forces. These battles also revealed a number of significant shortcomings in the organization and conduct of the Soviet offensive. Member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front I.V. Stalin on May 31 and June 1 turned to the chairman of the RVS L.D. Trotsky with a request

send two rifle divisions to the front from the North Caucasus . However, Moscow rejected this request, and in a telegram dated June 2, V.I. Lenin informed Stalin that measures had been taken to send reinforcements to the Southwestern Front. ***“Try to bring up units and by all means continue the launched offensive more energetically,”*** Lenin emphasized and recalled that ***“according to the decision of the Politburo, the attack on the Crimea was suspended until new decisions of the Politburo”*** <sup>147</sup>.

Thus, the front command was required to abandon the main forces for the Kyiv offensive. Based on the experience of offensive battles from May 26 to June 3, 1920, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front outlined tactics for breaking through the enemy's defenses. The army commanders were ordered to abandon frontal attacks on enemy fortifications, carefully prepare each offensive operation, and operate in strike groups in the most important areas. As early as May 31, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front instructed the command of the 12th Army to stop frontal attacks on Kyiv, to leave only the 58th Infantry Division against the enemy's Kyiv bridgehead. Bring all other forces of the army into a strike group to force the Dnieper River and break through

On the 148th front north of . To ensure the actions of the troops of the 12th Army when crossing the Dnieper Kiev, the Revolutionary Military Council of the front allocated the northern detachment of the Dnieper flotilla, commanded by M.G. Stepanov, commissioner - I. Danilov.

The 14th Army was ordered to assemble the main body on its right flank. On June 3, Stalin, on behalf of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front, sent a special telegram to Budyonny and Voroshilov, in which he pointed out the reasons for the failures of the units of the 1st Cavalry Army in the region of Lipovets and Pogrebishchi during the fighting from May 30 to June 2. The telegram noted that these battles show that the enemy skillfully combines maneuver warfare with trench warfare. Under these conditions, the Cavalry Army could not do without its own infantry, which should pin down the enemy from the front, so that the cavalry units could freely make deep detours of the enemy's fortified points. The command of the 1st Cavalry Army was ordered to abandon frontal attacks of fortified points by cavalry units. Fortified places were recommended to bypass. On the same day, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front, by its directive, set the 1st Cavalry Army the task of breaking through the front and defeating the Kyiv group of enemy troops. It was ordered to put up a barrier in the Lipovets-Pogrebishche area, but with the main forces to break through the front of the Polish troops on the Novo-Fastov-Pusto-varov line in order to capture the Fastov area with a swift blow and, acting on the rear, break the Kiev enemy grouping

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To carry out the operation, the 1st Cavalry Army was concentrated in a sector 10 km northeast of Novo-Fastov. The combat formation of the 1st Cavalry Army was multi-echelon, which ensured an increase in strike force during the offensive. The 4th cavalry division was in the first echelon, the 14th and 11th cavalry divisions were in a ledge behind its flanks, and the 6th cavalry division and a special cavalry brigade were in the third echelon. Due to the fact that the upcoming raid required the speed of movement of units, the command of the 1st Cavalry Army

On June 4, he ordered to unload the horse units from sedentary convoys and send them to the rear in the area of Potash station. This movement of convoys was perceived by Polish intelligence as a withdrawal to the rear of the entire 1st

Cavalry Army. By the evening of June 3, the 1st Cavalry Army occupied the starting line for the offensive. These days it was rainy. The Polish command hoped that bad weather would prevent the Soviet troops from starting hostilities. Moreover, it was confident that the Soviet cavalry had suffered significant losses, and was itself preparing an offensive with the goal of finally defeating Budyonny's army. At dawn on June 5, the 1st Cavalry Army went on the offensive. Rain and thick fog allowed the Soviet cavalry to covertly reach the line of attack and go on a swift offensive. When the Polish troops noticed the Soviet fighters, it was already too late. Under heavy machine gun and artillery fire, the red cavalry, skillfully combining combat on foot and on horseback, overcame the enemy's barbed wire and crushed his advanced units. Two hours after the start of the attack, the Polish front was broken through in the Skvira-Samgorodok area. In these battles, the cavalymen of the 14th and 4th divisions, who repulsed the counterattack of the 3rd Polish cavalry brigade, especially distinguished themselves.

The offensive of the Soviet troops was so swift that by the evening of the same day, the 1st Cavalry Army broke through to the north and east of Kazatin, destroying the Fastov-Kazatin-Lipovets railway in a number of places, and went to the rear of the 3rd Polish Army. At 6 pm on June 7, the 4th Cavalry Division captured Zhitomir, destroying the Polish garrison and freeing 7,000 Red Army soldiers from captivity, who immediately went into action. Two wagons of military equipment were seized at the station. On the same day, the 11th Cavalry Division occupied Berdichev. In addition, the 1st Cavalry Army defeated the Polish cavalry group under the command of General Savitsky, covering the left flank of the 6th

Polish army. By June 8, the 1st Cavalry Army finally broke the resistance of the enemy troops concentrated in the area of Kazatina and Berdichev. The penetration depth of the 1st Cavalry Army in the rear of the Polish troops was 120-140 km. The Polish front in Ukraine was split into two parts. Having lost control of their troops, the Polish headquarters, headed by Pilsudski, who was in Zhytomyr, hastily relocated to Novograd-Volynsky.

On the Dnieper, Soviet troops were assisted by the Dnieper military flotilla, which, with the capture of Kyiv by the Poles, turned out to be disconnected: some ships operated north, others south of Kyiv. In this regard, it was decided to split the flotilla into two battle groups: Severodneprovskaya and Yuzhnodneprovskaya. The base of the South Dnieper detachment of 16 combat and 14 auxiliary ships was Yekaterinoslav. In accordance with the general offensive plan of the troops of the South-Western Front, the Severodneprovsky flotilla detachment, which retreated to the Sozh River, was supposed to participate in forcing the Dnieper north of Kiev and support the attack of the 12th Army strike group with artillery fire. To do this, the detachment had to make the transition from the Sozh River to the Dnieper. The task was extremely difficult: the enemy covered the entrance to the Dnieper with strong artillery and machine-gun fire in the area of the town of Loeva, where the destroyed bridge across the Dnieper blocked the fairway of the river. The ships had to go through a narrow passage under the bridge near the shore, every minute risking running aground or running into ice cutters. However, there was no other way to the Dnieper. On the night of June 2, a detachment of nine ships

armed with artillery and machine guns moved towards the Dnieper. In order not to create noise from the wheels, the ships went at low speed. Passing under the bridge, they were fired upon by the enemy who discovered them. The Soviet ships returned fire. As a result, the entire detachment, with the exception of one gunboat, overcame the Loev barrier, went to the Pechka area and took part in the crossing of the Dnieper along with units of the 12th Army. In these battles, the crews of the gunboats "Small", "Vengeful", "Heroic" and the minesweeper "Tral" especially distinguished themselves. At the end of the crossing of units of the 12th Army, the Northern Detachment of the Dnieper Flotilla transferred a rifle brigade along the river to Svaromye to Vyshgorod, and on June 9 took part in the battles for crossing the Irpen River. All this allowed the strike group of the 12th Army, consisting of

The 7th Infantry Division and the Bashkir Cavalry Brigade, after fierce fighting on June 3, force the Dnieper. Having repelled counterattacks of the enemy, who sought to throw those who had crossed into the Dnieper Soviet units,

On June 8, the strike group of the 12th Army entered the Dymer area. The Southern Group of the Dnieper Flotilla operated no less successfully, which, together with the landing force attached to it (about 1 thousand people with 10 machine guns and 2 cannons), after stubborn fighting on June 7, captured the city of

Rzhyschiv, and on June 10 knocked out enemy units from the heavily fortified point Trypillia. This contributed to the successful offensive of the Fastov group. In the battles in the Tripoli area, which were of a particularly fierce nature, the fighters and commanders of the gunboats "Destructive", "Mighty" and "Threatening" showed examples of courage and heroism. After breaking through the enemy fortifications in the Trypillia region, the way to Kyiv was opened for the Southern detachment of the Dnieper flotilla. The 58th Rifle Division of the 12th Army advanced on Kyiv from the east. The withdrawal of units of the 1st

Cavalry Army into the deep rear of the 3rd Polish Army and the successful advance of the shock group of the 12th Army created favorable conditions for the complete encirclement of Polish troops in the Kiev region. On June 8, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front demanded that the 12th Army occupy the area of the Borodyanka and Irsha stations in order to cut the last Kiev-Korosten highway, along which the enemy still had the opportunity to withdraw his troops from the Kiev region. At the same time, the Fastovskaya group of troops was supposed to capture the Fastov-Kornin area no later than June 10, and the cavalry brigade under the command of G.I. Kotovsky - to cut the Kyiv-Zhitomir highway. The 14th Army was supposed to, having pulled up the 8th Cavalry Division in the shortest possible time, continue the offensive in the direction of Vinnitsa-Zhmerynka 150. For its part, the command of the 3rd Polish Army, having no connection with the command of the South-Eastern Front, on June 7 decided to its troops in the Kiev area and take up defense along the Dnieper, Irpen and Stugna rivers. However, on June 8, the command of the Polish front in Ukraine decided to withdraw the 3rd Army to the line of the river. Teterev-Zhytomyr-Berdichev. At the same

On the same day, the 3rd Infantry Division began to arrive in the Shepetovka area, and the 1st Reserve Infantry Brigade began to arrive in the

Novograd-Volynsky area. The beginning of the withdrawal of Polish troops to Kyiv contributed to the Soviet offensive. Already on June 8, the Fastovskaya group, as a result of a swift attack by the Kotovsky brigade, liberated the city of Skvira. Then, parts of the Fastovskaya group occupied the cities of Belaya Tserkov and Fastov, thereby cutting off the escape routes

enemy from the Kyiv region to the south and southwest. Fulfilling the task of encircling the Polish troops in the Kyiv region, the Soviet troops intensified their onslaught. The strike group of the 12th Army launched an offensive on a broad front. Breaking the resistance of the enemy, on June 11, its units fought across the Pripyat River and captured the town of Chernobyl and the Irsha station, capturing over 300 prisoners and a railway echelon with cargo. At this time, the 73rd brigade of the 25th rifle division approached, which immediately entered the battle. The approach of units of the 25th Chapaev division significantly strengthened the shock group of the 12th army. Fierce fighting unfolded at that time in the sector of the 14th Army. Its units attacked the enemy several times, who had settled in the city of Gaisin. The Poles made every effort to stop the advance of the 14th Army. They repeatedly launched counterattacks. The fighting in this area continued for several days, and on the morning of June 13, Soviet troops occupied Gaisin.

On June 9, the 1st Cavalry Army launched an offensive against Kyiv, attacking the 3rd Polish Army from the rear. At this time, the 12th Army was approaching the Kiev-Korosten railway in the Borodyanka-Teterev area; The Fastovskaya group occupied the city of Fastov, and the 1st Cavalry Army, having entered the Kornin-Khodorkov-Voitovtsy region, created a threat of encirclement for the 3rd Army. Together with units of the 1st Cavalry Army, the cavalry brigade G.I. Kotovsky, cutting off the Kiev-Zhytomyr highway. The position of the 3rd Polish Army turned out to be catastrophic. She had to hastily retreat. Due to the fact that the troops of the Fastovskaya group occupied Fastov, and the 3rd Polish Army began to withdraw from the Kiev region, the command of the Southwestern Front considered the further advance of the Cavalry Army to the east unnecessary. Believing that the troops of the 12th Army and the Fastovskaya Group would be enough to defeat the 3rd Polish Army, on June 10, the RVS of the Southwestern Front ordered the 1st Cavalry Army to turn west and go to the Zhytomyr-Kazatin region for a further strike on the rear 6th Polish Army<sup>151</sup>.

On June 10, the 3rd Polish Army received a categorical order to immediately withdraw from Kyiv to Korosten and create a new front along the river. Grouse. While the Soviet cavalry went to the rear of the 3rd Polish Army, units of the 12th Army launched an offensive in the Kyiv region. 58th Infantry Division under the command of P.E. Knyagnitsky, taking advantage of the withdrawal of troops

The 3rd Polish Army from the eastern bank of the Dnieper, as a result of a skillfully carried out maneuver, captured 350 people and captured large trophies. On June 12, the division, in cooperation with the landing force of the Southern Group of the Dnieper Flotilla, entered Kyiv. Meanwhile, the Polish command sought to withdraw the main forces of its 3rd Army from the threat of encirclement. To do this, it transferred the 6th and 9th infantry divisions and Bulak-Balakhovich's detachments located in the Chernobyl region from Belarus to the area of Borodyanka and Irsha stations. In the Borodianka area, Polish troops clashed with the 12th Army. A fierce battle broke out. Exceptional perseverance, courage and courage in these battles were shown by the fighters and commanders of the 25th Chapaev division, who fought against superior enemy forces.

On June 11, the 1st Cavalry Army occupied Korostyshev, the next day - Zhytomyr, temporarily abandoned by it during a raid on the rear of the Kyiv group of enemy troops. After making sure that the 3rd Polish Army was gradually breaking through to the northwest, and having received the appropriate instructions from the commander-in-chief, the RVS of the Southwestern Front on June 11 ordered the 1st Cavalry Army with two cavalry divisions to strike through Radomysl on Irsha, where at that time 75 The 1st brigade of the 25th division fought with units of the 3rd Polish army, which was trying to avoid defeat. Then the 1st Cavalry Army, together with units of the 12th Army, was to develop an offensive against Korosten<sup>152</sup>. However, this order arrived at the army headquarters only on June 13. On June 12, the Polish command ordered the 3rd Army to withdraw to the river. And at all costs to keep Korosten and Novograd-Volynsky. The 6th Army also had to retreat, trying to close its left flank with the right flank of the 3rd Army.

The strategic initiative firmly passed into the hands of the Soviet troops, whose immediate goal was to prevent the withdrawal of the 3rd Polish Army to Korosten, cut off its retreat and inflict a decisive defeat. On June 13, it was decided to disband the Fastov group. Its 44th division became part of the 12th army, and the 45th division was subordinated to the command of the 1st cavalry army. On the same day, the RVS of the Southwestern Front again ordered the 1st Cavalry Army to force its two divisions to move to Radomysl and Irsha. At the same time, the command of the Cavalry Army was pointed out the need to keep in mind the further task - an attack on Novograd-Volynsky, Rovno<sup>153</sup>.

At 11 p.m. on June 13, the Revolutionary Military Council of the 1st Cavalry Army issued the order: "In the shortest possible time, capture the area of the Korosten railway junction, destroying the enemy group retreating from Kiev along the Zhytomyr highway and by rail to Korosten." At the same time, the 1st Cavalry was supposed to hold the Zhytomyr region. To do this, the army was divided into two temporary operational groups. The first under the command of K.E. Voroshilova as part of the 4th and 14th divisions was supposed to

take Korosten faster. The second group under the command of S.M. Budyonny (6th and 11th divisions) was supposed to occupy and hold the Zhytomyr region.

At dawn on June 14, Voroshilov's group moved to Korosten. At noon, stubborn battles unfolded, as the enemy sought to delay the Soviet cavalry at any cost. On the morning of June 15, units of the 14th Cavalry Division captured Radomysl. On the same day, from the intercepted operational order of the command

The 3rd Polish Army command of the 1st Cavalry became aware of the withdrawal of Polish troops from the Kyiv region to Korosten. The order spoke about the organization of the movement of units of the 3rd Polish Army in three columns and indicated the routes of movement of the troops. This made it easier for the Soviet troops to complete the task. It was necessary to throw moving parts across the retreating enemy, but the fatigue of the horse train, rains and lack of fodder and ammunition led to the fact that on June 16

1st Cavalry received a day. However, on June 11-12, the main units of the 3rd Polish Army had already retreated to the Radomysl-Irsha region, and the stability of the Polish defense increased. The created situation allowed the enemy to withdraw his main forces to Korosten. Later, the Polish General Staff wrote about the exit from the ring of its 3rd Army: ***"The Polish Army, engulfed from the north, managed to get out of the critical situation without hindrance, almost nowhere encountering opposition from Budyonny's cavalry"*** <sup>156</sup>. As a result, the 3rd Polish Army managed to avoid complete defeat.

Nevertheless, the breakthrough by the 1st Cavalry Army of the front of the Polish troops in Ukraine allowed the Soviet troops to seize the strategic initiative. On June 15, 1920, the troops of the South-Western Front began 155 to pursue the enemy troops retreating to the . The defeat of the 3rd Army forced the Polish west. From the morning of June 13, the command began to withdraw the 6th Army to the west. Soviet troops, having occupied Gaisin, began to pursue the retreating units. The 8th Cavalry Division under the command of V.M. Primakov, which was part of the 14th Army. She delivered sudden short blows to the enemy on the flanks and from the rear. On June 20, units of the 14th Army captured the Kalinovka and Zhmerinka stations. By June 20, Soviet troops reached the Zhitomir-Berdichev-Kazatin-Vinnitsa line.

The further task of the 1st Cavalry Army was an offensive in the direction of Novograd-Volynsky and Rovno, in order to, pursuing the 3rd Polish Army along a parallel route, cut it off from the river. Western Bug. On the morning of June 20, the 1st Cavalry Army went on the offensive, but only a week later it managed to break the stubborn resistance of the counterattacking enemy along the Uborot and Sluch rivers. After two days of fighting, Soviet troops cleared the right bank of the Sluch River and on June 27 entered Novograd Volynsky. By the evening of June 28, units of the 45th division captured Novo-Miropol. After fierce fighting on June 27-28, Kotovsky's cavalry brigade captured the town of Lyubar, which covered the way to Shepetovka. Meanwhile, the 7th Infantry Division of the 12th Army liberated Korosten on June 20. By June 29, between the 6th (12th, 13th, 18th infantry divisions and the Ukrainian group) and the newly created 2nd (3rd, 6th infantry divisions, 10th, 1st reserve infantry brigades) by the Polish armies, covering the Lvov and Rovno directions, respectively, formed a gap of up to 80 km. The breakthrough of the enemy front in Ukraine and its gradual

retreat to the west, in turn, exposed the flank of the Polish troops of the North-Eastern Front. This led to the fact that on June 18 the withdrawal of the Polish units that were in front of the Mozyr group of the Western Front in the area of the city of Rechitsa began. Using the success of the troops of the Southwestern Front, the commander of the troops of the Mozyr group, T. S. Khvesin, ordered the pursuit of the enemy. Soviet troops crossed the Dnieper and, having launched an offensive on its right bank, on the night of June 29, they liberated the city of Mozyr. The exit of the troops of the Western Front to this area violated the defense of the Polish troops operating in Belarus. For the initiative shown by T.S. Khvesin was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. Developing the offensive, the left-flank divisions of the Western Front by June 30 reached the Zhlobin-Mozyr railway line. In addition to the Mozyr troupe, some units of the 16th Army also went on the offensive<sup>156</sup>. The failures of the Polish army only spurred its vindictive vandalism. As reported in

a Soviet note dated June 2, sent to England, France, Italy, the United States, after the Polish troops abandoned Borisov during the May offensive of the Soviet Western Front, they subjected it to destructive artillery fire from the other side of the Berezina and turned it into piles of smoking ruins. Hundreds of people died in the fire, and 10,000 of the population found themselves in the open air. <sup>157</sup> The Polish units retreating from Kiev behaved barbarously. The city's power station, city sewerage, passenger and freight . Not less than stations were put out of action. The governments of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR pointed out in a note addressed to the Entente countries dated June 11 that "the beautiful Cathedral of St. Vladimir, this unparalleled pearl of Russian religious architecture and a unique monument with priceless frescoes by Vasnetsov, was destroyed by the Poles during the retreat only because they

they wanted to vent their anger, at least on inanimate objects..."<sup>158</sup> True, when the Soviet troops entered the city the next day, it turned out that the Vladimir Cathedral had not been damaged, unlike the city economy. There were complaints

from the opposite side as well. In June, the POCC sent a protest to the International Organization of the Red Cross about the fact that during the retreat of the Red Army in Berdichev, Zhytomyr and Kiev, hostages were taken from the civilian population and taken far to the rear, that when returning to Berdichev, "the Red Army soldiers threw everyone out of the Red Cross infirmaries the sick and wounded, not sparing the honor and life of the medical staff. "The Bolsheviks are torturing prisoners," the document said, "in order to obtain military information from them, acting against a truism about the rules of warfare." But was the Polish army free from such excesses, if it included such units as the detachment of S. Bu-lak-Balakhovich, about which one of the Polish officers wrote in a letter to his wife: "This is a man without ideology, a bandit and a murderer and his comrades-subordinates are the same ... They do not know shame and look like barbarians. In my presence, they threw under his feet the heads of the Bolsheviks, cut off by sabers ... I drank with him all that night, and in the morning he and his group and I and the regiment went to work. The beating of the Bolsheviks was terrible . "<sup>159</sup> On June 27, the Revolutionary Military Council of the

Southwestern Front set new tasks for the further development of the offensive. Units of the 12th Army, together with the 1st Cavalry Army, were to capture the Kostopol-Rovno area no later than July 3rd. Pursuing the enemy, the 1st Cavalry should take Shepetovka on June 29, and Rovno on July 3. The 14th Army was tasked with occupying Starokonstantinov and Proskurov by June 29th. The troops of the Southwestern Front were to cut the enemy troops into two parts and push them back to Polissya and Romania. As a result, the main forces of the Red Army would be able to advance on Lublin and Lvov<sup>160</sup> . For its part, the Polish command decided to take advantage of the advanced position of the 1st Cavalry and try to defeat it with a concentric blow . Meanwhile, the 1st Cavalry Army continued its offensive against

the city of Rovno, during which a meeting battle took place on July 1-2, ending in the defeat of the Polish troops. On July 3, the Soviet cavalry liberated Ostrog and opened the way to Rovno. The 12th Army, having broken the resistance of the enemy, reached the Mozyr region on June 29, and by July 2, with its main forces, reached the Uborot River. The 14th Army approached the Ostropol-Mogilev-Podolsky line. Developing the offensive, the 1st Cavalry Army on July 4, having defeated the numerically superior enemy forces, captured an important stronghold of enemy resistance - the city of Rovno. This created a threat of a breakthrough of Soviet troops through the territory poorly covered by Polish troops to the west and forced the Polish command to begin the withdrawal of its troops. On July 7, units of the 11th Cavalry Division occupied Dubno. In the meantime, on July 5, the 2nd Polish Army received an order to "get out between Budyonny's army and Kovel in order to prevent his march to the west and secure the Rovno-Kovel railway line behind him." Accordingly, it was decided to hit both flanks of the 1st Cavalry Army. As a result of attacks on July 8-9, the Poles occupied Rovno again, but the Soviet 4th and 6th Cavalry Divisions, which had greater maneuverability, launched a concentric counterattack and drove the Poles out of the city at 07:00 on July 10. As early as July 2, the command of the Southwestern Front,

given the wooded and swampy terrain between Kovel and Brest-Litovsk, proposed to move units of the 1st Cavalry Army along the Lutsk-Vladimir Volynsky-Kholm-Lukov line. After the approval of these proposals by the commander-in-chief on July 8, on July 11, 1920, the command of the Southwestern Front issued an order to the armies of the front: in order to build on the success of the 12th Army, advance in the direction of Kovel-Brest-Litovsk. The 1st Cavalry Army was to rapidly pursue the retreating enemy, inflicting the main blow around the Brest-Litovsk region in the direction of Lutsk-Grubeshov-Lublin-Lukov. The 14th Army, covering the operation of the main strike group from the direction of Galicia, was to advance on Tarnopol-Lvov<sup>162</sup> . Thus, the main operational direction of the Southwestern Front was Brest. However, in fact, after the capture of Rovno, the Cavalry Army was involved in battles against a strong Polish grouping in the Dubno-Brody-Kremenets direction and was forced to deviate to the southwest.

In close cooperation with the 1st Cavalry Army, other parts of the front also successfully advanced. The cavalry brigade of Kotovsky, having broken the resistance of the enemy, liberated the village of Belopolye by July 4. The 60th Rifle Division of the 14th Army broke through the defense front of the 6th Polish Army east of Proskurov. The 8th Cavalry Division, using the success of the infantry, quickly went to the rear of the 6th Polish Army and on the night of July 4 drove the Polish units out of Proskurov and the town of Cherny Ostrov. As a result, the management of the Polish 6th Army was completely disorganized and its connection with the front command was disrupted. Pursuing the enemy, the troops of the Southwestern Front by July 10 reached the line

Sarny-Rivne-Proskurov-Kamenets-Podolsk<sup>163</sup>. Developing the offensive, the armies of the Southwestern Front entered the territory of Western Ukraine in mid-July. After the occupation of Rovno, the 1st Cavalry Army was drawn into stubborn battles in the Dubno-Kremenets region, which changed hands several times. Nevertheless, on July 12-21, the Soviet cavalry managed to advance in the direction of Lvov, which allowed the troops of the 14th Army to speed up the offensive. The successes of the Southwestern Front contributed to the creation of favorable conditions for the transition to a general offensive for the troops of the Western Front, since, in order to save their troops in Ukraine, the Polish command threw all the reserves there and removed part of the forces located in Belarus. The interaction of the two fronts was an important condition for achieving a common victory over the enemy troops.

#### **Soviet offensive in Belorussia**

Meanwhile, the Soviet command was taking steps to reinforce the troops of the Western Front, which received more than 58,000 reinforcements in June alone. During the preparation of a decisive offensive in Belarus, eight rifle divisions, four rifle brigades, one cavalry brigade and a squadron arrived at the front. Taking into account the rear units and institutions, the number of troops on the Western Front increased from 274 thousand in May to 347 thousand in June and up to 447 thousand in July 1920. The front included about 20 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions (Table 12). From April 15 to June 7, 128.7 thousand rifles, over 2 thousand machine guns, 125.5 million rounds of ammunition, 243 guns of various systems, 13 thousand checkers, 91 aircraft were sent to the Western Front. During the same time, the front troops received more than 313,000 overcoats, 295,000 tunics, 310,000 trousers, 175,000 padded jackets, 605,000 pairs of shoes and other military supplies. As early as June 8 and 9, the Commander-in-Chief, by his directives, demanded that the command of the Western Front increase the activity of its troops and tie up the enemy in Belarus, but on the whole, the actions of the Soviet units were limited to reconnaissance searches and raids<sup>165</sup>. By July 4, 1920, the following grouping

of troops was located on the Western Front: on the front from the city of OPOCHKA to Lake Zhado, 160 km long, the 4th Army was located (commander - E.N. Sergeev, member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army - V.I. Mezhlauk), created on June 18 from the Northern group. To the south on the front from Lake Mlado to Lake Ssho (35 km) was the 15th Army (commander - A.I. Kork, member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army - N.S. Tikhmenev). From Lake Sho to Lake Pelik (front length 80 km), the Southern Group of Forces of the 15th Army was deployed, on June 9 it was renamed the 3rd Army (commander - VS Lazarevich, member of the RVS of the army - K.A. Mekho-noshin). On the front from Lake Pelik to Parichi (200 km) was the 16th Army (commander - N.V. Sollogub, member of the RVS of the army - A.E. Dauman). Finally, on the southern wing of the Western Front was the Mozyr Group (commander T.S. Khvesin), which occupied the front from Parichi to Mozyr inclusive (80-100 km)<sup>166</sup>. **Table 12**

#### **Combat composition of the Western Front on July 1, 1920**

##### ***Divisions,***

***brigades of the Army*** 4th ZKK (10th, 15th KD), 12th, 18th, 53rd SD, 164th

15th brigade 55th SD 4th, 11th,

3rd 16th, 33rd, 54th SD

16th 5th, 6th, 21st, 56th SD 2nd,

8th, 10th, 17 -I, 27th SD Mozyr group 57th

SD, Consolidated detachment **Table 13** **Combat strength of**

#### **Polish troops in Belorussia**

1st ***brigades*** 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 1st Lithuanian-Belarusian Infantry

4th Division, 7th rez. PBR 2nd, 4th,

15th Infantry Division, 12th Infantry

Brigade 6th Infantry Division Polesskaya group 9th,

14th, 16th Infantry Division Reserve 2nd Lithuanian-Belarusian Infantry Division As part of the Western

Front, there were 145 346 fighters (103,288 infantry fighters and 11,294 cavalry fighters), 2,758 machine <sup>167</sup>. guns, 693 guns, 12 armored trains, 30 armored vehicles, 3 tanks and 73 aircraft. The troops of the 4th, 15th and 3rd Soviet armies, uniting 59.9 thousand bayonets and cavalry, were opposed by the 1st Polish army (General Zhigadlovich) of 35.1 thousand bayonets and cavalry. The 4th Polish Army (General S. Sheptytsky) and the Polessky Group (General V. Sikorsky), which had



37.5 thousand bayonets and sabers. Thus, in the direction of the main attack, the Soviet troops of the Western Front outnumbered the enemy by 3 times. In the zone of action of the 16th Army and the Mozyr group, the superiority was insignificant. The Polish command, expecting a new Soviet offensive in Belarus, proposed to withdraw troops to the Baranovichi-Lida-Orany-Vilna line, but General Sheptytsky believed that one should still try to stop the Soviet offensive on the existing front line. The Soviet plan was based

on the same idea as in the May offensive in Belarus - resting on the right flank against Lithuania and East Prussia, push the enemy troops back to the swampy Polesye. The grouping and tasks of the armies were defined in the directives of the RVS of the Western Front of June 30 and July 2, 1920. The 4th Army was ordered to deliver a decisive blow from the area north of Lake Belaya Yelna with the main forces. The 3rd Cavalry Corps had the task of going behind enemy lines, acting in the direction of Svetsiansky. The 15th army dealt the main blow to Glubokoe, the 3rd - to Dokshitsy - Parfyanovo station. The 16th Army was entrusted with the task of liberating Minsk. The Mozyr group was to advance on Glusk169. On July 2, the RVS of the Western Front issued the famous political order No. 1423:

**"Red soldiers! The hour has struck. [...] The troops of the Red Banner and the troops of the rotting white eagle face a deadly battle. [...] Let us justify the hopes of the socialist fatherland. [...] In the West, the fate of the world revolution is being decided. Through the corpse of White Poland lies the path to the world conflagration. On bayonets we will bring happiness and peace to working mankind. To the west to decisive battles, to resounding victories. Line up in battle columns, the hour of the attack on**

**Vilna, Minsk, Warsaw has struck. March!"**170 At dawn on July 4, the troops of the Western Front went on the offensive. Together with units of the 33rd Kuban Rifle Division of the 15th Army, 3 captured Renault tanks repaired at the Putilov Plant were used as part of the strike force for the first time. The offensive began successfully. On July 4-7, the right-flank troops of the Western Front crushed the front of the 1st Polish Army and inflicted heavy losses on it. The so-called "Dvina" group of this army was defeated, and its remnants retreated to the territory of Latvia, where they were interned. Another group of the 1st Polish Army - the group of General L. Zheligovsky (10th Infantry Division) retreated to the line of old German trenches, to the line of Dvinsk-Lake. Naroch - 20 km west of Molodechno - Baranovichi - Pinsk and further along the western bank of the Stokhod River. The third group of the 1st Polish Army under the command of General Yendzheyevsky (7th reserve brigade and infantry brigade of the 5th division) also suffered a serious defeat. The success was so significant that by the end of the first day of the offensive, the troops of the right wing of the Western Front had advanced 15-20 km. The Polish command, unable to stop the offensive of the Red Army

in Belarus, was forced to give an order on July 5 to withdraw in the general direction to the city of Lida. The Soviet troops resolutely pursued the enemy, but they failed to completely encircle the 1st Polish Army, primarily because the command of the Western Front made serious miscalculations when planning the operation. The grouping of Soviet troops, which was supposed to make a swift detour of the flank of the 1st Polish Army (3rd Cavalry Corps and 4th Army), was much weaker than the grouping of Soviet troops that delivered a frontal attack (15th Army). Therefore, the advance of the bypassing group was slower than the holding group, which allowed the enemy to avoid encirclement, and on July 6 even break away from the Soviet units that slowed down the offensive. The defeat and the withdrawal of the 1st Polish Army sharply worsened the position of the 4th Polish Army and

created favorable conditions for the offensive of the 16th Army and the Mozyr Group of Soviet Forces. The 16th Army was advancing directly on Minsk. She dealt the main blow with the forces of three divisions of the five available. They had to force the Berezina River southeast of the city of Borisov in the area from the mouth of the Rava River to the mouth of the Kleva River (front width 35 km). The 27th Omsk Rifle

Division (commander V.K. Putna) was the strongest in combat terms in the strike force of the 16th Army. She had about 8 thousand bayonets and sabers, 260 machine guns and 34 guns. The division had great

combat experience: it fought against the Czechoslovak corps in 1918 and participated in battles with Kolchak until their complete defeat. At 2 am on July 7, the 16th Army went on the offensive. By 5 o'clock in the morning, the advanced units of the shock group crossed the Berezina. Stubborn battles ensued. The enemy began to retreat. On July 9, the Red Army liberated the city of Igumen. On July 10, the Poles left Bobruisk. The fighting approached directly to Minsk, which the enemy surrounded with a semi-circle of trenches with barbed wire. The 27th division was to bypass the city from the north and south. The attack on

27th and 17th Infantry Divisions. By noon, the city was completely cleared of Polish troops. With the defeat of the main forces of the 1st Polish Army and the liberation of Minsk, the first stage of the offensive of the Soviet troops of the Western Front ended. In these battles, which took place from 4 to 11 July, the Red Army broke through the enemy's front and inflicted serious losses on him. On the entire front, Polish troops were forced to retreat to the West. On July 12, a new stage began in the offensive of the units of the Western Front, pursuing the retreating Polish troops. The main forces, concentrated on the right flank, were to advance, hiding behind the territory of Lithuania and East Prussia, and, hanging over the enemy flank, not

171 let him gain a foothold on a line convenient for defense ·

The command of the Polish army sought to find forces and means to stop the offensive of the Soviet troops. On July 9, Pilsudski ordered the troops to hold the front along the line of Vilna - German trenches - Luninets - r. Styr and r. Zbruch. His plan was to gain a foothold in the north along the line of the old German trenches and then launch a counterattack on the troops of the Soviet Western Front from the Brest area. Retreating to the old German trenches, the enemy hoped to exhaust and bleed the Soviet troops with a stubborn defense and again go on the offensive. Plan was destined to fail. The line of German trenches, dug in 2-3 rows, interconnected by communications, with a large number of concrete shelters and nests for machine guns, was already broken through by the armies of the Western Front in mid-July.

On July 15, Pilsudski ordered the withdrawal of troops to the line Pinsk-Oginsky Canal-r. Shara-r. Neman to Grodno. In order to delay the Soviet offensive, in order to enable the troops of the 1st Polish Army to get out of the blow, the 4th Polish Army was supposed to strike north on the flank of the advancing units of the Western Front, but this maneuver failed.

On July 14, the 3rd Cavalry Corps and the 164th Rifle Brigade occupied Vilna after a 6-hour battle. This event activated the Lithuanian troops, who opposed the units of the 2nd Lithuanian-Belarusian Infantry Division, which began to retreat to Lida. An attempt to coordinate the actions of the Soviet and Lithuanian troops due to the unwillingness of the Lithuanian leadership, which was under pressure from the Entente countries, resulted in 4-day fruitless negotiations. As a result, it was decided that the Red Army would not cross the Novye Troki-Orany-Merech-Avgustov lines with large forces . On July 17, the troops of the 15th Army entered Lida, on July 19, the 3rd Cavalry Corps, unexpectedly for the enemy, broke into Grodno, knocking out a small Polish garrison, and the troops of the 16th Army liberated Baranovichi. On July 23, the Mozyr group occupied Pinsk.

### **Choice**

In the context of the collapse of the Polish front in the East in Warsaw on July 1, the State Defense Council was created, consisting of Pilsudski, Marshal of the Sejm, the Prime Minister, three members of the government, 10 deputies from various parliamentary parties and 3 representatives of the military command. On July 5, the Defense Council decided to turn to the Entente with a request for assistance in peace negotiations. During negotiations with representatives of the Entente in Spa on July 9-10, it was decided that its mediation was subject to the following conditions: the Poles would withdraw to the Curzon Line, renounce claims to Lithuanian lands and agree to hold a peace conference of representatives of the RSFSR, Poland, Finland in London , Lithuania, Latvia and Eastern Galicia. In addition, Poland was obliged to accept the decision of the Entente on the issues of its borders with Lithuania, Czechoslovakia and Germany and on the future of Eastern Galicia. If Moscow refuses the proposals of the Entente, it will support Poland with military materials. The Polish leadership was forced to agree to these conditions, but tried to defend its interests in Vilna and Eastern Galicia. As a result of the negotiations, it was decided that Moscow would be asked to stop the troops 50 km from the Grodno-Brest-Litovsk-Bug line, Vilna was recognized as a Lithuanian city, and in Eastern Galicia the front line was to become the armistice line . The Polish command hoped to use the truce as a respite to bring the troops into order<sup>174</sup> . On July 11, 1920, a note from Lord Curzon was handed over to Soviet

representatives in England demanding to stop the offensive on the line Grodno - Valovka - Nemir-dov - Brest-Litovsk - Dorogusk - Ustilug - east of Grubeshov - Krylov - west of Rava-Russkaya - east of Przemyśl to the Carpathians . Soviet troops were to stop 50 km east of this line, and in Eastern Galicia on the front line reached by the time of the truce. Finally, the issues of delimitation of territories in Eastern Europe should have been resolved at an international conference in London. In the event that the offensive of Soviet troops into Poland continues, England and her allies will support Poland "with all the means at their disposal." In addition, it was proposed to conclude a truce with Wrangel, whose troops were fighting in Northern Tauria. Moscow was given 7 days to think, and it was reported that Poland agreed to these conditions<sup>175</sup> .

On July 13-16, the Soviet leadership discussed the English note. Opinions in the Soviet leadership were divided. A rather cautious position was taken by the head of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, who proposed to accept this proposal, to go to the "Curzon Line", on which it was necessary to negotiate with Poland, pulling up the rear and resting the troops. If necessary, it was possible to launch a new offensive from this line. The head of Soviet diplomacy offered to set counter conditions - the beginning of peaceful Soviet-Polish negotiations, the reduction of the Polish army and the issuance of military equipment received from the allies. The fact that the "Curzon Line" excluded Eastern Galicia from Poland was perceived in Moscow as recognition of its rights to this territory. L.B. Kamenev considered it possible to agree to a truce, but with guarantees of the weakening of Poland. Since Eastern Galicia is not recognized as Polish territory, it should be occupied by troops while diplomatic maneuvers are underway. L.D. Trotsky believed that it was possible to agree to a truce with Poland, but not with Wrangel, since this was an internal issue for Russia. I.T. Smilga considered it necessary to continue the war with Poland until it was Sovietized or sufficient guarantees of a lasting peace were obtained. In Markhlevsky's opinion, the Kholm and Bialystok regions could be offered to Poland in exchange for peace. "that the Poles on our front are already done for." There are still

serious battles ahead, "that is why I consider inappropriate the bragging and self-satisfaction harmful to the cause that some comrades have turned out to be: some of them are not satisfied with successes at the front and shout about the "march to Warsaw", others, not content with the defense of our Republic from the enemy attack, proudly declare that they can make peace only in "red Soviet Warsaw" ... In a categorical form, I must declare that without exerting all the forces in the rear and at the front, we will not be able to emerge victorious. Without this, we will not be able to defeat the enemies from the West. This is especially emphasized by the offensive of Wrangel's troops, which appeared like "thunder from a clear sky" and assumed menacing proportions .

On July 11, already in Pravda, Stalin again, noting the important successes of the Southwestern Front, emphasized that although "our successes on the anti-Polish fronts are undoubted ... but it would be unworthy bragging to think that the Poles at the base have already been finished, what remains for us only to make a "march to Warsaw". This bragging ... is inappropriate not only because Poland has reserves that it will undoubtedly throw at the front ... but above all because a new ally of Poland has appeared in the rear of our troops - Wrangel, who threatens to blow up from the rear the fruits of our victories over the Poles ... Therefore, it is ridiculous to talk about the "march on Warsaw" and, in general, about the strength of our successes until the Wrangel danger has been eliminated . In response to a request from the Central Committee of the RCP(b), Stalin informed Moscow on July 13 that he supported the idea of direct negotiations with Poland without intermediaries and not in London, but on the territory of Russia<sup>179</sup>.

The assessment of the situation by the military command, set out in a note dated July 15, was rather optimistic,<sup>180</sup> which, along with political calculations and the general enthusiasm caused by victories at the front, led to a refusal to accept the British conditions. The calculations of the Soviet leadership boiled down to the fact that since the enemy was weak, a strong blow would lead to his final collapse and would destroy the entire Versailles system, which did not take into account Soviet interests. As a result, on July 16, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) decided to reject Curzon's note, but at the same time not to abandon negotiations with Poland and accelerate the offensive in order to "help the proletariat and the working masses of Poland free themselves from their landowners and capitalists" <sup>181</sup>. On July 17, Moscow officially replied to London , that she agrees to negotiate with Warsaw, but without intermediaries<sup>182</sup> . In response, on July 20, England announced that in the event of a Soviet offensive, it would cancel trade negotiations with the RSFSR. Meanwhile, the Second Congress of the Comintern, which was held in Moscow on July 19-August 7, appealed to the working people of Western Europe to support the RSFSR in

the war with Poland . On July 17, the chairman of the RVSR L.D. Trotsky in his directive, pointing out that the governments of the Entente feared the undermining of the Versailles system as a result of the victories of the Red Army and sought to involve Romania in the war, brought to the attention of the commander-in-chief that "the government found it necessary to reject the British mediation." Therefore, "it is necessary to take measures to comprehensively ensure our rapid and energetic advance on the shoulders of the retreating Polish White Guard troops." "To give firm operational instructions to the command of the Western and South-Western fronts regarding the further continuous development of the operation both to the border marked by the Entente and beyond this border in the event that by force of circumstances we were forced to temporarily <sup>184</sup> cross this border " <sup>20</sup> In July, the commander-in-chief ordered the troops of the fronts "to continue the vigorous development of operations ... without limiting them to the border indicated in Lord Curzon's note"<sup>185</sup> . At this point the military

the command of the Red Army, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic, as well as the command of the Western Front, having clearly overestimated the successes achieved by the Red Army and the degree of defeat of the enemy's war, made a number of

miscalculations. On July 19, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Western Front I.T. Smilga reported to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic that the left flank of the Polish troops was completely defeated. July 21 Commander-in-Chief S.S. Kamenev urgently arrived in Minsk, at the headquarters of the Western Front. Having familiarized himself with the situation on the spot according to the reports of the front command, on the night of July 22 he gave a directive to occupy Warsaw with the troops of the Western Front no later than August 12. July 23, the commander-in-chief sent from Smolensk addressed to the deputy chairman of the RVSR E.M. Sklyansky a telegram in which he reported his impression of the situation on the Western Front:

***"THE MOST ESSENTIAL IS THE HIGHEST MOOD IN THE PARTS, GUARANTEEING THE POSSIBILITY TO GO FURTHER WITHOUT REDUCING ENERGY. 16 DATES BUSY GRODNO, AND YESTERDAY SLONIM. BOTH THESE SUCCESSES SHOW THAT THE PP. THE NEMAN AND THE SHAR HAVE BEEN BROKEN AND NOW THE ENEMY HAS NO LINES IN THE WAY OF THEIR WITHDRAWAL ON WHICH THEY COULD CAUSE TO DETAIN US. THE POSSIBILITY IS NOT EXCLUDED TO COMPLETE THE TASK OF THE CHU IN A THREE-WEEK PERIOD ""***. This telegram testified that the commander-in-chief, after the reports of the RVS of the Western Front, in essence,

considered the Polish army incapable of further resistance. This assessment was wrong.

In the context of overly optimistic calculations for a quick victory, the Soviet command began to reconsider its future plans. It was at this time that the idea of a concentric attack by the troops of the Western and Southwestern fronts on Warsaw gave way to an eccentric attack on Warsaw and Lvov. Based on the fact that the troops of the Western Front continued their rapid offensive, without encountering serious resistance from the enemy, on July 22 the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front sent a telegram to the commander-in-chief, in which it was proposed to transfer the main blow of the front troops from the Brest direction to Lvov, that is, within the limits of Galicia. The command of the Southwestern Front, as A.I. Yegorov, considered the liberation of the capital of Eastern Galicia, Lvov, politically important, and intended to further support the troops of the Western Front advancing on Warsaw "by striking through Lvov in the rear of Warsaw." The shifting of the direction of the main attack towards Galicia, in the opinion of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front, was also dictated by the danger of Romania speaking on the side of Poland<sup>188</sup>. Accordingly, Stalin informed the RVS of the 1st Cavalry Army that the Western Front had broken through the first line of Polish defense near Slonim along pp. Neman and Shara. and is closer to Brest-Litovsk than the South-Western Front. "It is possible that in connection with this circumstance your army will have to abandon Brest and turn south." In view of the expected appeal of Poland with a proposal for a truce, "it is necessary, as far as possible, to hasten the advance of your army"<sup>189</sup>.

The fears in the high command regarding the possible intervention of Romania led to the idea of strengthening the actions of the troops of the Southwestern Front in Eastern Galicia. In this situation, the appearance of the directive of the commander-in-chief of July 21 is quite understandable, setting the task for the Southwestern Front to occupy the Kovel-Vladimir-Volynsky regions by August 4, and with the rest of the forces, including the 1st Cavalry Army, to defeat the 6th Polish and Ukrainian army, pushing them south to the borders of Romania, especially since the front command itself proposed a similar option, which was approved by Kamenev on July 23<sup>190</sup>. At the same time, the commander-in-chief was convinced that in August 1920, alone, without the help of the Southwestern Front, the Western Front could break the enemy's resistance on the Vistula and occupy Warsaw. Moreover, Kamenev believed, as he wrote about this on July 21 in the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, that three armies of the Western Front (4th, 3rd and 15th) would be quite enough to complete this task if Poland did not receive significant support, in addition to the speeches of Romania and Latvia<sup>191</sup>. These three armies in total at that time had a little more than 80 thousand fighters. The Commander-in-Chief planned to withdraw the 16th Army to the reserve in case Latvia came to the aid of Poland. By the way, on July 19, Tukhachevsky, based on the likely difficulties in breaking through the line of German trenches, also proposed to reject the actions of the 1st Cavalry to the southwest<sup>192</sup>. New strategic decisions of the Soviet High Command were also facilitated by the fact that on July 22 Poland proposed to the RSFSR to agree on an "immediate truce and the opening of peace negotiations"<sup>193</sup>.

Already on July 23, Moscow informed Warsaw that the main command of the Red Army

received an order to "immediately begin negotiations with the Polish military command in order to the conclusion of an armistice and the preparation of a future peace between the two countries". At the same time, at 18.35 on July 23, 195, the commander-in-chief demanded that the troops of the Western Front still speed up the offensive. At the same on Warsaw. On the day Stalin informed the RVS of the 1st Cavalry Army that Poland had applied for an armistice and was waiting

response by July 30th. "Based on this, the most impetuous offensive from you towards Lvov is required, and in general you need to try to manage to seize the maximum of what we can take before the thirtieth"<sup>196</sup>. On July 23, the command of the Southwestern Front set the troops the following task: the 12th Army, having created a barrier in the direction of Brest-Litovsk, was to advance in the direction of Kholm-Krasnik-Annopol, the 1st Cavalry Army was to occupy Lvov no later than July 29, and 14th Army - to advance from the river. Zbruch in the general direction Tarnopol-Przemyslyany-Go

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rodok.

Thus, the actions of the Southwestern Front should henceforth be directed not to assist the troops of the Western Front, which delivered the main blow in the Warsaw direction, but to solve an essentially independent task related to the liquidation of enemy troops in the Lvov direction and the liberation of Galicia. At the same time, the strike groups of the Western and Southwestern fronts were to operate in a significant separation from each other. The change in the direction of the main attack of the troops of the Southwestern Front on the eve of the decisive battles, on which the outcome of the Soviet-Polish war as a whole depended, contradicted the real situation. Therefore, it is difficult to disagree with the opinion of V.A. Melikov that on July 21-23 "the commander-in-chief ... made a mistake of strategic importance"<sup>198</sup>. And the situation was such that in some, the most important areas, the battles dragged on for several days and the resistance of the Polish troops more and more intensified.

Full of optimistic expectations, like the rest of the Soviet leadership, Stalin informed Lenin on July 24 that the Lvov operation might succeed. Regarding the general policy, he believed that "now that we have the Comintern, a defeated Poland, and a more or less tolerable Red Army, when, on the other hand, the Entente is seeking a respite in favor of Poland in order to reorganize, re-equip the Polish army, create cavalry and then strike again, perhaps in alliance with other states - at such a moment and with such prospects, it would be a sin not to encourage revolution in Italy. It must be admitted that we have already entered a period of direct struggle against the Entente, that the policy of maneuvering has already lost its predominant importance, that we can now and must pursue a policy of offensive (not to be confused with a policy of rushing in) if we want to retain the initiative in foreign affairs, which we recently acquired. Therefore, the question of organizing an uprising in Italy and in such still weak states as Hungary and the Czech Republic (Romania will have to be defeated) must be put on the agenda for the Comintern. [...] In short: we need to weigh anchor and set off on the road

before imperialism has had time to even the slightest degree to fix its disordered cart, and it can still fix it somehow on

known period, and did not go over to a decisive offensive.

On July 30, Kamenev again demanded that the troops "conduct an offensive on the Polish front with the same tension and energy ... in order to completely destroy the Polish army in the shortest possible time". Under conditions, the command of the Soviet Western Front delayed the coordination of the procedure for the transition of the front line by the Polish military delegation by all sorts of tricks, delaying it until July 30<sup>201</sup>. Oddly enough, this delay did not cause irritation in Warsaw at all, since the Polish command was in no hurry to conclude any agreement under pressure from the Bolsheviks. He was quite satisfied with a temporary truce in the worst case along the "Curzon Line", but Warsaw was not going to allow any interference in internal affairs. To expand the social base, the Polish government on July 15 secured the approval of the principles of agrarian reform by the Sejm. On July 24, a government of national defense was established in Warsaw with the participation of all political forces, and on July 25 an Anglo-French military mission arrived in Poland and military supplies from the West began to arrive.

At the end of July 1920, according to the Italian ambassador in Warsaw, F. Tommasini, the Polish leadership tried to persuade Germany to strike from East Prussia against the flank and rear of the Soviet Western Front. However, Berlin sought not only to return the Danzig corridor and Upper Silesia, but also, under the pretext of saving Poland from the Bolsheviks, tried to revise the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles and admit Germany to the League of Nations. As a result, these contacts ended in vain<sup>203</sup>. On July 27, Pilsudski issued a directive requiring the troops to hold the front along the line of the river. Western Bug-Ostrov-Graevo (or Ostrolenka-Omulev) and organize a counterattack from Brest-Litovsk to the north and from Ostrov to the east<sup>204</sup>. Under these conditions, the Polish leadership was also in no hurry to start negotiations, and the Polish delegates who arrived in Baranovichi on August 1 did not have the authority from the government to negotiate peace, but only the authority from the military command to negotiate a truce. The Soviet side was interested in

the simultaneous conclusion of armistice agreements and a preliminary treaty. Therefore, on August 2, she demanded that the Polish delegation receive the appropriate authority and begin negotiations in Minsk on August 4. But the Polish delegation refused and returned behind the front line. <sup>205</sup>.

Polish propaganda in every possible way emphasized the "selfless struggle of the Polish troops against the invasion of the Bolsheviks", which was supposed not only to strengthen the Polish rear, but also to facilitate the receipt of military materials from the Entente, which Warsaw really needed. In order to maintain order in the army, demoralized by defeats, and to combat desertion, the Polish leadership on July 24 introduced emergency and field courts. Meanwhile, on July 24, after three days of intense fighting, the Soviet troops of the Western Front broke through the Grodno-r. Neman-r. Shara-Slonim. Having crossed the Neman and Shara, on July 25, Soviet troops entered the city of Volkovysk, on July 27 in Osovets and Pruzhany, on July 29 - in Lomzha, and on July 30 Kobrin was occupied. On August 1, the Red Army entered Brest, on August 3, Soviet troops occupied Ostrov, and on August 6, Ostro Lenka. At the same time, the fighting in early August showed that Polish resistance had intensified, and for a week the troops of the 16th Army and the Mozyr Group could not force the river. Western Bug. As correctly noted by V.A. Melikov, at the end of July 1920, the offensive impulse of the troops of the Western Front "transformed into a stormy movement by inertia." Special willpower was needed to, after analyzing the situation, taking into account the reports of the divisional and army command, to decide to suspend traffic for 1-2 weeks along the rivers Beaver, Narev and Western Bug<sup>206</sup>. On July 30, the

Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland (Polrevkom) was created in Bialystok, consisting of Yu. Markhlevsky, F. Dzerzhinsky, F. Kohn and E. Prukhnyak, to ensure the activities of which Moscow allocated 1 billion rubles. The task of the Polrevkom was to prepare for the Sovietization of Poland, but the lack of suitable personnel and poor knowledge of local conditions led to the mass population remaining indifferent to his undertakings. The image of the Polrevkom was especially damaged by an attempt to resolve the agrarian issue according to the Russian model: while the Polish peasants sought to obtain landlords' land as personal property, they began to create socialist farms on it. In Ukraine, on July 8, the Galician Revolutionary Committee (Galrevkom) was created, which included V. Zatonsky, M. Baran, F. Konar, I.

Nemolovsky, K. Litvinovich and others. The work of Galrevkom was carried out under the general slogan of the expulsion of the Poles, and on August 1, the state independence of Eastern Galicia was proclaimed in Tarnopol with the task of establishing Soviet power<sup>208</sup>. However, in general, the population, although happy about the departure of the Poles, was divided on the issue of orientation towards Europe or Moscow. In any case, the success of both revolutionary committees was closely related to the situation at the front. **To**

#### **Lvov and Warsaw On**

the Southwestern Front, the 1st Cavalry Army, developing an offensive against Lvov, captured Brody on July 26, and

by July 28 on a broad front with battles crossed the Styr River, occupied Buski and reached the river. Western Bug. To the north, the troops of the 12th Army, having crossed the rivers Styr and Stokhod, approached Kovel. In the south, the 14th Army broke through the Polish

defenses on the river. Zbruch and on July 26 captured Tarnopol. On July 29, Stalin informed the RVS of the 1st Cavalry Army that negotiations with Poland were postponed until August 4. "So you have four more days at your disposal. In addition, before receiving a formal order from the front, you can beat the Poles regardless of the timing. [...] So strike Lvov, now you have time." True, he reported to Moscow that "in view of the exhaustion of the horse train, it would probably not be possible to take Lvov before the thirtieth"<sup>209</sup>. However, the relatively sl

The 14th Army led to the fact that the flanks of the 1st Cavalry turned out to be uncovered, and, taking advantage of this and pulling up reinforcements, the 2nd and 6th Polish armies launched a counterattack on Brody on July 29. Fierce fighting ensued, during which the 1st Cavalry Army was forced to withdraw to the east to avoid encirclement. On August 3, the Poles returned Brody

and Radzivilov<sup>210</sup>. Still in an atmosphere of optimistic expectations, Stalin informed Lenin on August 4 that "Budyonny's hitch is temporary" and "does not mean a turning point in favor of the enemy." "The general outlook on the fronts, in my opinion, is this: Poland is relaxed and in need of a respite, in view of which we must set conditions that make it impossible for the recovery of bourgeois Poland." At the same time, he proposed to transfer the 12th, 1st Cavalry and 14th armies to the Western Front. On August 5, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) approved this idea, pointing out that the front against Wrangel was more important than the front against Poland, which was considered practically defeated. On the same day, Stalin reported to Moscow about the fierce battles in the Brody region, "in view of which the Cavalry is feeling very tired and in need of rest. In this regard, since yesterday Budyonny has switched from offensive to defensive, and one cannot count on the occupation of Lvov in the coming days. Meanwhile, on August 4, the 12th Army entered Kovel, and the 14th

the army went to the river. Strypa. On August 5, Vladimir-Volynsky was occupied, and on August 7, units of the 12th Army reached the river. Western Bug from Vlodava to Korytnitsa. On August 11, Soviet troops entered Grubeshov, but on August 13 they were driven back by the enemy across the river. Western Bug. At this time, the Polish command began to implement its plan to repel the offensive of the Soviet Western Front on Warsaw, which will be discussed in more detail below, and began to withdraw troops from the Lvov direction. Exhausted in previous battles, the Soviet cavalry received a respite. The course of

events on the Soviet-Polish front in the second half of July 1920 showed that the struggle on the fronts had become more intense. This was explained by the fact that the fresh replenishment of the Polish army made it possible to increase its combat effectiveness. If from January 1 to June 30, 1920, the active Polish army received 209,471 reinforcements, then from July 1 to August 20 - 172,400. The mood of Polish society was also reflected by the increased number of volunteers: for the first half of the year 87,101, and for July 1 - On August 20, there were already 77,514 people<sup>213</sup>. In addition, at that time the Polish army operated near their bases. While the Polish army was reinforced with the help of the Entente, the continuously and rapidly advancing Soviet troops were tired. They were more and more detached from their rear. Due to the fact that railways, stations, water pumps exploded during the retreat of the Polish troops, the supply of reinforcements, ammunition and food for the advancing Soviet troops was very difficult. Parts of the Red Army suffered losses during the offensive and, naturally, weakened. In July and early August 1920, reports from the fronts from the advanced Soviet units testified to the fatigue of the troops, that they needed human reinforcements, ammunition and weapons. As a result, already at the turn of the river. Western Bug resistance of the Polish troops increased dramatically. While the Polish troops held back the Soviet offensive on the line of the Western Bug, the Polish

command, with the participation of the French mission of General M. Weygand, developed a new plan of military operations. The main idea of this plan, approved on August 6, 1920 by Pilsudsky, was as follows: 1) to pin down Soviet troops in the south, covering Lvov and the Drohobych oil basin; 2) in the north, prevent a bypass along the German

border, as well as weaken the blow of the Red

armies by repulsing their attacks on the bridgeheads on the east bank of the Vistula;

3) in the center - an offensive task: the rapid concentration of a mobile army on the lower Vepsha, which would then hit the flank and rear of the troops of the Western Front attacking Warsaw and defeat them. Thus, the Polish command, planning the fortification and defense of Warsaw, was simultaneously preparing a strike to the south - in the Lublin sector, to the rear and flank of the main forces of the Western Front, which were advancing around Warsaw from the northeast. The southern sector of the front during the battle for Warsaw began to be regarded by the enemy as a secondary one, whose task was mainly to cover Lvov and the oil basin of Galicia. In accordance with this plan, the

Polish troops were divided into three fronts: Northern, Middle and Southern. The northern front was commanded by General Yu. Galler. It consisted of three armies, of which the 5th army (General Sikorsky) was to defend on the river. Vkra north of Warsaw, the 1st Army (General F. Latinik) - on the outskirts of Warsaw, the 2nd Army (General B. Roy) received the task of defending on the left bank of the Vistula at the line of Gu-ra-Kalvaria-Konvenice.

The middle front under the command of General Rydz-Smigly (from August 14 - Pilsudski) was a mobile group of troops. The main striking force of this front was the 4th Army (General Skersky), concentrated in the Demblin-Lublin region. The main direction of its actions was Minsk Mazovetsky (Novo-Minsk). To the right, the strike group of the 3rd Army was concentrated under the command of General Rydz-Smigly (1st and 3rd infantry divisions of legionnaires, 4th cavalry brigade and Major Yavorsky's cavalry brigade). To the south, the remaining units of the 3rd Army (General Zelinsky) deployed, which were primarily to provide the flanks and rear of the strike group concentration area, and then, leaving the cavalry for cover, advance in a northeasterly direction.

Southern Front under the command of General Ivashkevich as part of the 6th Army (General Edzhevsky) and Petliura's Ukrainian army was supposed to cover Eastern Galicia<sup>214</sup>.

According to the plan, out of 23 Polish divisions, 20 were destined for the Warsaw operation. Most of the cavalry was concentrated in this area. The combat strength of the Polish troops allocated for the battle on the Vistula consisted of 107.9 thousand bayonets and sabers. The troops were armed with 1,834 machine guns, 108 heavy and 526 light guns. In addition, they had over 70 tanks<sup>215</sup>. 3 Polish divisions (6th Army) and the "Ukrainian People's Army" were intended for defense in the Lvov region. During the unfolding battles near Warsaw in August 1920, the Entente hastily sent about 600 guns through Romania for the Polish army, which, upon arrival, were immediately put into battle. Receipt

such a number of guns provided significant assistance to the Polish troops in the battle on the Vistula. The Polish leadership began to implement its counterattack plan and tightened measures to maintain discipline in the army, where, along with propaganda for the defense of the fatherland, courts-martial were widely used, and on August 14 barrage detachments with machine guns were introduced to stop the retreating units<sup>216</sup>. The implementation of

the plan adopted on August 6 was associated with great difficulties and risk for the enemy. His success depended primarily on the extent to which the Polish troops would be able to break away from the Soviet armies pursuing them and in an organized way to occupy the areas he had outlined. Of particular difficulty was the concentration of units of the Polish 4th Army on Wiepsha, which had to move almost along the front. Piłsudski later wrote: ***"The 14th, 16th and 21st divisions of the 4th Army, which were still on August 6 and even 7 in hot battles on the Bug, had not only to break away from the enemy, but also to make a risky, almost flank march to reach the area beyond Vepshem ... Somehow, a stronger onslaught from the enemy in another place ... put the whole maneuver under a question mark, without giving any confidence that the strike group, which I decided to command personally, will meet in a timely manner and in the composition appointed by me"'***<sup>217</sup>.

The implementation of this enemy maneuver was facilitated by the fact that in the Brest-Litovsk-Kholm area there were only weak Soviet forces of the Mozyr group and the right-flank division of the 12th Army, which were not capable of a rapid offensive. Thus, the violation of the interaction of the Western and Southwestern fronts led to the dispersal of the forces of the Soviet troops in various, unrelated directions and made it easier for the enemy to prepare a strong counterattack on the flank and rear of the troops of the Western Front.

In the meantime, the Polish leadership on August 4 decided to try again to start negotiations with Moscow. On August 6, England again offered the RSFSR to agree to a truce, but Moscow refused, citing the desire for bilateral Soviet-Polish negotiations on an armistice and peace, to which it announced its consent on August 7. The Soviet side, in response to the Polish appeal, offered to start negotiations in Minsk on August 11. However, the active actions of Wrangel's troops in the south worried the Soviet leadership more and more, especially since on August 10 France recognized him as the de facto "ruler of the South of Russia." Under these conditions, the speedy completion of the Polish campaign was in the interests of Moscow, since it would allow the transfer of troops against Wrangel. In an attempt to exert indirect influence on Poland through England, Moscow on August 9 informed London of the Soviet terms of the peace agreement with Warsaw, which were approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) on July 31 and included the reduction of the Polish army to 50 thousand people, the curtailment of the military industry, the transfer of surpluses to Russia weapons and a ban on their import from abroad. In addition, the Polish government was asked to allocate land to families affected by the war and create a workers' militia. For its part, Moscow undertook to withdraw troops from the Polish front and agreed to the border along the "218 Curzon Line" with some retreats in favor of Poland in the area of Bialystok and Kholm.

England accepted these Soviet proposals rather calmly (all the more so since she was not informed of the demand to create a workers' militia), but they had no effect on her activities in relation to Warsaw. Since the Entente countries needed time to help Poland, they advised Warsaw to start negotiations and drag them out as long as possible. For its part, the Soviet government at the beginning of August again declared that it recognized the independence and ethnographic borders of Poland and that the actions of the Red Army did not pursue any predatory goals. "The offensive of the Soviet troops is a purely military operation that does not prejudice the future peace treaty and does not encroach on the independence and inviolability of the Polish state within its ethnographic borders, and negotiations will begin as soon as the Polish delegates return to conduct them"<sup>219</sup>. Meanwhile, the belligerents reached an agreement on the transition of the Polish delegation to the front line on the Miedzyrzec-Siedlce highway at 20.00 on August 9, but the Polish delegates did not arrive at the appointed time. The next day, in Siedlce, occupied by the Red Army, officials of the Polish Foreign Ministry, who were among the prisoners, informed the Soviet side about the readiness of the Polish delegation to cross the front on August 14. On August 11, the composition of the Polish delegation was approved in Warsaw, which was instructed to conclude a truce and declare that questions about the ownership of Grodno and Vilna should be resolved between Poland and Lithuania. On the morning of August 14, the Polish delegation left Warsaw and<sup>220</sup> crossed the front line.

Under these conditions, the task of the High Command of the Red Army was to finally break the resistance of the main enemy forces and ensure the end of the war with Poland. In this moment



exceptional prudence, precise planning of the operation and the adoption of all measures to ensure the strike force, which was supposed to conduct an offensive in the Warsaw direction, were required. First of all, it was necessary to immediately pull up the 1st Cavalry Army to the Ivango-Rod direction, direct the main efforts of the 12th Army to assist the Western Front, and organize clear interaction during the entire Warsaw operation. As early as August 3, 1920, the Commander-in-Chief sent a directive to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front, which indicated the possibility of transferring the 12th Army and the 1st Cavalry to the disposal of the Western Front in the near future to unite all Soviet troops advancing to the Vistula, under unified command. However, the directive did not say a word about the need to change the tasks of these armies. Moreover, on the same day, the commander-in-chief in a new telegram to the command of the South-Western Front was interested in what had been done to cover the 1st Cavalry from the north, and demanded that the advance of the 12th Army to Vladimir-Volynsky<sup>222</sup> be accelerated. As early as August 2, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) adopted a resolution on the creation of an independent Southern Front to fight against the White Guard armies of Wrangel. It is curious to note that, despite

the fierce battles with the Red Army in Northern Tavria, the Wrangel officers, assessing the Soviet-Polish battles, as a rule, "cheered" for the Reds and toasted them for the capture of Warsaw<sup>223</sup>. On August 5, 1920, at the plenum of the Central Committee of the RCP(b), which discussed the situation on the fronts, it was decided to continue the offensive of the Red Army in order to finally break the resistance of Poland, supported by the Entente. In this responsible final stage of the war, it was necessary to unite all Soviet forces to solve the main task - to eliminate the resistance of the enemy's Warsaw grouping. The Plenum of the Central Committee approved the decision taken by the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic to transfer the 12th, 1st Cavalry and 14th armies to the Western Front. On August 6, on the basis of the decision of the plenum of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) on the unification of all armies as part of the Western Front, the commander-in-chief gave a directive to the command of the South-Western Front on preparations for the transfer, together with the 12th and 1st Cavalry armies, to the Western Front and the 14th army<sup>224</sup>. On the same day, the commander-in-chief ordered the command of the Southwestern Front to change the infantry units of the 1st Cavalry and withdraw it to. But in no document does Kamenev

<sup>225</sup> reserve for rest and preparation for a new, decisive blow ordered to stop the Lvov operation. By August 10, the 1st Cavalry was put into reserve.

Meanwhile, at this time, the command of the Western Front was developing a plan for an offensive against Warsaw. The troops of this front numbered about 101.3 thousand bayonets and sabers, somewhat inferior to the enemy in numbers. In terms of directions, the balance of forces of the parties was as follows. On the Warsaw and Novogeorgievsk directions, the enemy had about 69 thousand bayonets and cavalry, and the Soviet troops (4th, 15th, 3rd and 16th army) - 95.1 thousand bayonets and cavalry. In the Ivangorod direction, where the Polish command was preparing to launch a counterattack, there were 38 thousand bayonets and cavalry, and the troops of the Mozyr group opposing them numbered only 6.1 thousand bayonets. The Soviet units that reached the Vistula were extremely tired and few in number. During the fighting, they suffered heavy losses, the rear units lagged behind by 200-400 km, in connection with which the supply of ammunition and food was disrupted. The troops did not receive reinforcements. In some divisions, no more than 500 fighters remained. Many regiments, in essence, turned into companies. According to the participants in these battles, in some regiments there was only enough infantry to use it as a cover for machine guns and guns. The troops did not have enough cartridges and rifles, there were no artillery shells. All this led to the fact that by the beginning of the decisive battle on the Vistula River, the balance of forces had changed dramatically in favor of the enemy. **The combat composition of the troops of the parties by August 14, 1920**

**Table 14 Red**

<b>Army Army</b>		<b>Opponent</b>	
	<b>Divisions, brigades</b>	<b>Army</b>	<b>Divisions, brigades</b>
4th	3rd KK (10th, 15th KD), 12th, 18th, 53rd, 54th SD	5th	17th, 9th, 18th, Volunteer PD, 1st Siberian PBR, KD Drechera, 8th KBR, Modlin garrison, c. "Lower Vistula" 11th, 8th, 10th, 15th, 1st Lithuanian-Belarusian PD, Fortress br,
15th	4th, 11th, 16th, 33rd SD	1st	7th cut. br 2nd, 4th PD 14th, 16th, 21st PD, 12th PD
3rd	5th, 6th, 21st, 56th SD	2nd	1st, 3rd, 7th,
16th	2nd, 8th, 10th, 17th, 27th SD	4th	6th Ukrainian PD, 4th cbr,
Mozyr group	57th, 58th SD, Consolidated detachment	3rd	Donskaya cbr, gr. Gozera, kav.gr

		Major Yavorsky, gr. Bulak Balakhovich
12th	7th, 24th, 25th, 44th SD, gr. Golikova (25th KBR, Bashkir KBR, 6th cavalry regiments of the 7th and 44th	5th, 6th, 12th, 13th PD, 1st KD, 1st KBR,
1st Cavalry	SD) * 4th, 6th, 11th, 14th, 8th KD, 1st KBR, 45th,	1st, 2nd Volyn, 3rd, 4th Kiev, Ukrainian 5th
14th	47th SD 60th, 41st SD	Kherson SD, Consolidated CD

On August 7, the commander-in-chief pointed out to Tukhachevsky that the 16th Army was weak, and the Southwestern Front was advancing to the south, so the threat from Ivangorod (Demblin)<sup>226</sup> should be taken into account. On August 10, the command of the Western Front ordered the troops to advance on Warsaw. All four armies of the front: the 4th, 15th, 3rd and 16th, as well as the 3rd cavalry corps, were to advance around Warsaw from the north<sup>227</sup>. On August 10, during negotiations over a direct wire, Kamenev pointed out to Tukhachevsky that "you launched the main mass of your forces north of the Bug through a relatively empty space, and only your 16th army had to fight with the main mass [of the enemy]," as a result, the main enemy forces

would be met only on the Vistula, while they could have been "patted" on the Bug line. However, Tukhachevsky believed that "the main forces of the enemy are not to the south, but to the north of the Bug", but they elude attacks. The front commander believed that "the enemy, by all indications, does not want to give a general battle, having the Vistula in the rear." At the end of the conversation, Kamenev declared that "if you so categorically insist that the main forces of the Poles are north of the Bug, with which I can't agree at all according to the information available at the headquarters, but, considering that you are more familiar with this issue, I give you freedom actions, but I set the task of defeating the Polish forces as soon as possible without being carried away by a deep strategy, since in this respect I am afraid that we will not have the time necessary for such decisions. Thus, the commander-in-chief, in essence, let go of the management of this extremely important operation, on the success of which the outcome of the entire war to a large extent depended.

Probably, now we will never know the reasons for such a passive position of the commander-in-chief in relation to the commander of the Western Front, however, some considerations can still be expressed. First, it should be remembered that a similar situation already arose at the beginning of 1920 during the offensive of the Caucasian Front, which was then commanded by Tukhachevsky. Having disobeyed the direct order of the commander-in-chief, Tukhachevsky was able to win the battle on the outskirts of Rostov-on-Don, as if confirming his military talent. Secondly, one should take into account personal relationships in the high military command of the Red Army, where Tukhachevsky was considered a protege of Trotsky, and it was not at all easy for Kamenev to spoil relations with the all-powerful chairman of the RVSR and a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP (b). Thirdly, let us recall that Tukhachevsky was already a member of the RCP (b), while Kamenev remained a non-party military man. In addition, the Soviet command was still in captivity of optimistic calculations for specialist<sup>229</sup> a quick victory. All this, taken together, apparently predetermined the above passivity of the commander in chief, which ultimately led to the defeat near Warsaw. **"Miracle on the Vistula"** By August 11, the troops of the Western Front reached the line Ciechanow-Pultusk-Wyshkow-Sedlec-Lukow-Kotsk.

A weak Mozyr group

remained on the front south of Warsaw, 160 km long. Meanwhile, the day before, the headquarters of the Western Front learned from the captured Polish order that the enemy was preparing a counterattack from the Ivangorod region. So, on the night of August 13, Tukhachevsky informed Kamenev by direct wire that "on an intercepted order, the 3rd army [of the enemy] was going to go on the offensive and even overturned one Khvesin brigade. In general, there will still be a lot of action to the south of Kholm, "and asked to expedite the transfer of the 12th and 1st Cavalry armies to the Western Front<sup>250</sup>. However, the front command did not foresee any countermeasures, apparently being in the pleasant confidence that the enemy would not be able to take anything serious. It should be noted here that it was on August 12 that the Soviet leadership began to establish specific ties with Germany, which did not allow military supplies from France to pass to Poland, hoping to purchase weapons, equipment and food from Berlin<sup>231</sup>. It would seem that everything confirmed Moscow's optimistic expectations. For his part, on August 11, the commander-in-chief issued a directive to the command of the Southwestern Front, which indicated that the Western Front was starting to deliver a decisive blow in order to capture the Warsaw region. In view of this, it was proposed to temporarily abandon the immediate capture of the Lvov region and

send as many forces as possible to support the Western Front to strike.

about Lublin-Novo-Alexandria. The directive stated that the 12th Army was to strike with the main forces in the general direction of Lublin, and the 1st Cavalry Army was to leave **the** Zamostye-Tomashov-Grubeshov region. The Commander-in-Chief considered it necessary to transfer first the 12th and then the 1st Cavalry Army into direct subordination to the commander of the Western Front. The directive reported that Tukhachevsky indicated the deadline for the transfer of the 12th Army on August 13, and the 1st Cavalry - the number

15th. Thus, it was only now for the first time that the Commander-in-Chief set new tasks for the 12th and 1st Cavalry Armies. Unfortunately, this directive of the commander-in-chief was encrypted with errors, which made it impossible to decipher and required a new appeal to Moscow for its re-encryption, which was carried out in the middle of the day on August 13<sup>233</sup>.

Meanwhile, on August 12, the RVS of the Southwestern Front set the 1st Cavalry Army the task of capturing Lvov and reaching the river. San and turned to Moscow with a proposal to withdraw Budyonny's army to the reserve of the front "in case of Romania's action"<sup>234</sup>. On the morning of August 13, the cavalry again became involved in the battles for Lvov, about which the front command reported to Moscow on<sup>235</sup>. To assist the Mozyr group the same day only the troops of the 12th Army were allocated, which at the same time ensured the attack of the 1st Cavalry on Lvov from the north. On August 13, Kamenev sent a new order to the Southwestern Front, which stated:

**"For the development of a decisive offensive on the Western Front, I order: 1. From 12 o'clock on August 14, to transfer the commander-in-chief to the operational subordination of the command-zap of the 12th and 1st Cavalry armies without the 8th cavalry division with the demarcation line currently established between 1st Cavalry and 14th**

**armies"**<sup>236</sup>. On the same day, Stalin replied to the commander-in-chief that *"your last directive [...] unnecessarily upsets the existing grouping of forces in the area of these armies, which have already gone on the offensive. This directive should have been given either three days ago, when the cavalry was in reserve, or later, after the cavalry had taken the region of Lvov. At the present time it only confuses matters and inevitably causes an unnecessary, harmful hitch in business in the interests of a new regrouping. In view of this, I refuse to sign the relevant orders of Yugo-zap in the development of your directive.*

After a series of approvals, the order was signed by RVS front member R.I. Berzin and transferred to Budyonny's headquarters on August 14, but no new tasks were assigned to his army<sup>238</sup>. In addition, as B.M. Shaposhnikov and A.I. Yegorov, these orders were hopelessly late - they should have been given and started to be implemented on August 5-6. Time has been lost. Meanwhile, the 1st Cavalry occupied Brody again on August 14, and Busk on August 15. It is clear that in conditions when Soviet troops rushed to Lvov, hoping to take it from the day they put it on, the command of the 1st Cavalry was in no hurry to fulfill the order of the commander-in-chief, who, by the way, also did not see an urgent need to transfer cavalry to the Western Front<sup>239</sup>. Moreover, the order of the Western Front dated August 15, demanding the transfer of the cavalry to the Vladimir-Volynsky region, was transmitted without the signature of a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front, which made it possible not to carry out this incorrectly executed document<sup>240</sup>. On August 16, the troops of the 12th Army again occupied Grubeshov. Breaking through the enemy defenses on the river. Western Bug, August

17 1st Cavalry stormed Lvov, but the Poles managed to keep the city. On the second order of August 17, Budyonny, who hoped for an early capture of Lvov, replied that "the army cannot leave the battle at the moment for a new regrouping"<sup>241</sup>. The 1st Cavalry Army continued until August 19 protracted, heavy battles in the Lvov region. Thus, at the time of the decisive<sup>242</sup>.

battles of the Red Army for Warsaw, the 12th Army and especially the 1st Cavalry Army, which was a powerful strike maneuver force, were far away from the main sector of the fighting and could not provide the necessary assistance to the troops of the Western Front. In fact, in the Lvov direction, Soviet troops (about 43.1 thousand soldiers) were shackled by the active defense of the enemy (about 44.8 thousand soldiers). In this case, according to the fair opinion of V.A. Melikov, was affected primarily by "the lack of a solid strategic path and the extremely contradictory line of strategic behavior of the High Command (especially in the period from July 22 to August 18)"<sup>243</sup>, as well as a number of subjective factors in the relationship among the command staff at the level of fronts and armies. Meanwhile, on August 13, 1920, the battle on the Vistula began. As the Soviet troops approached the Vistula and the capital of

Poland, the resistance of the Polish troops increased. The enemy tried, using water barriers, to delay the further advance of the Soviet troops and put his units in order in order to subsequently go on the counteroffensive. On August 13, the 21st and 27th Soviet divisions captured a strong enemy stronghold - the city of Radzimin, located 23 km from Warsaw. The breakthrough in the area of Radzi-min created a direct threat to Warsaw. In this regard, General Haller

ordered to speed up the start of the counterattack of the 5th Polish Army and the shock group on the Vepse River. Having thrown up two fresh divisions from the reserve, the Polish command launched fierce counterattacks on August 14, trying to restore the situation in the Radzimin area. Soviet troops repulsed the onslaught of the enemy and even moved forward in some places. The Soviet 3rd Army, in cooperation with the left flank of the 15th Army, captured two forts of the Modlin fortress that day. In the battles near Radzimin, the Soviet troops clearly showed a shortage of ammunition and especially shells.

It is no coincidence that on the evening of August 13, division commander-27 V.K. Putna suggested to Commander-16, "hiding behind barriers, retreat back to the Bug", because he believed that "it is better to leave Warsaw not defeated and on your own initiative, than to retreat under duress from the enemy and broken"<sup>244</sup>. Of course, this offer was rejected. Moreover, the High Command, which did not know the state of the troops at the front, demanded that Warsaw be taken as soon as possible. On August 14, the chairman of the RVSR issued order No. 233:

**"Heroes! You dealt a crushing blow to the white Poland that attacked us. Nevertheless, the criminal and frivolous Polish government does not want peace... Now, as on the first day of the war, we want peace. But precisely for this we need to wean the bankrupt Polish government from playing hide-and-seek with us. Red troops, forward! Heroes, to Warsaw!"<sup>25</sup>**

On August 14, the 5th Polish Army went on the offensive. North of Warsaw, at 10 am on August 15, her cavalry group broke into Ciechanow, where the headquarters of the 4th Soviet army was located. The disorderly retreat of the army headquarters led to the loss of communication with both its troops and the front headquarters, as a result, the entire right flank was left without control. Having received information about the actions of the enemy north of Warsaw, the command of the Western Front ordered the troops of the 4th and 15th Soviet armies to defeat the enemy wedged between them, but unorganized counterattacks did not bring results, although units of the 4th army had the opportunity to reach the rear of the Polish troops north of Warsaw. On August 14, on the orders of Trotsky, the commander-in-chief demanded that the troops of the Western Front occupy the Danzig corridor, cutting off Poland from the military supplies of the Entente. The 16th Army's Rifle Division broke through to the Vistula at Gura-Kalvaria, but it was felt that these successes were already being achieved at the limit of their strength. At 14.35 on August 15, the command of the Western Front ordered the regrouping of the 1st Cavalry Army in the Ustilug-Vladimir-Volynsky region for 4 transitions. However, the order signed only by Tukhachevsky caused a correspondence between the staffs about its confirmation<sup>247</sup>. On the same day, the front command, having received from the 12th Army information about the concentration of enemy forces beyond the river. Vepsh, ordered the 16th Army to move the front to the south, but time had already been lost. News from the front

testified that the initiative is starting honey

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sluggishly move on to the enemy.

On August 16, the offensive of the Polish troops began on the Ciechanow-Lublin front. At the dawn of that day, Pilsudski's shock group went on the offensive from the Vepsh River, which broke through the weak front of the Mozyr group without much effort and began to quickly move to the northeast. Having received information about the activation of the enemy on the front of the Mozyr group, its command and the command of the 16th Army initially decided that it was just a small counterattack. In this situation, the Polish troops received an important gain in time for their operation and continued their rapid advance towards Brest-Litovsk, trying to cut off and press all the armies of the Western Front to the German border. Realizing the danger from the south, the Soviet command decided to create a defense along pp. Lipovets and the Western Bug, however, it took time to regroup the troops, and there were no reserves in the rear of the front. Already on the morning of August 19, the Poles knocked out the weak parts of the Mozyr group from Brest-Litovsk. An attempt to regroup the troops of the 16th Army also failed, since the enemy was ahead of the Soviet units when reaching any lines suitable for defense. On August 20, Polish troops reached the line Brest-Litovsk-Vysoko Litovsk-pp. Narew and the Western Bug, covering the main forces of the Western Front from the south. It should also be taken into account that all this time the Polish command had the opportunity to intercept and read radio messages from the Soviet command, which, of course, facilitated the actions of the Polish Army. Under these conditions, on August 17, the command of the Western

Front ordered the regrouping of troops to the east (the word "retreat" was never uttered), which actually meant the beginning of the retreat of the Soviet troops in order to get out of the blow<sup>249</sup>. True, as early as August 18, the commander-in-chief hoped for the capture of Warsaw and the creation of a rear group from the 48th and 55th rifle divisions near Brest-Litovsk. However, the disruption of the rear, and especially of the railway communication, brought all these hopes to naught. Front

only 67 steam locomotives were required, but there were none. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Warsaw took place in a constantly deteriorating situation for them. Already on August 22, units of the 15th Army retreated to Lomzha, but enemy attacks forced the Soviet troops to withdraw to the northeast to Graevo and Avgustov. In the most difficult situation were the troops of the 4th Army, which had advanced most far to the west. On August 22, the 4th Army was still in the Mlawa area, where it broke through the front of the enemy's 18th Infantry Division. Meanwhile, on August 22, the 8th Polish division occupied Ostrolenka, and on August 23, the 1st, 21st infantry divisions and

the 4th cavalry brigade drove the Soviet troops out of Bialystok. Under these conditions, the 4th Soviet Army managed to break through to Kolno by August 25, where the 15th and 8th Polish divisions finally blocked their path to the east. Having exhausted the possibility of resistance, the 18th, 53rd, 12th rifle divisions of the 4th Army and the main forces of the 33rd and 4th rifle divisions of the 15th Army crossed the German border on August 25 and were interned. Parts of the 3rd Cavalry Corps tried to break through to the east until August 26, but, having exhausted their ammunition, they also retreated to East Prussia. Polish troops in the battles for Warsaw lost 4.5 thousand people killed, 10 thousand missing and 22 thousand wounded, capturing more than 60 thousand Red Army soldiers<sup>250</sup>. Immediately after the liberation of the northeastern regions of the country, the Polish command began investigating the activities of persons who collaborated with the Red Army: courts-martial, imprisonment in a

fortress and concentration camps were widely used to punish them. In the changed situation, on August 17, Soviet-Polish negotiations began in Minsk<sup>252</sup>. It immediately became clear that the Polish delegation was authorized to negotiate only with the RSFSR, while a single Russian-Ukrainian delegation acted on the Soviet side. The resolution of this procedural issue was delayed. Initially, the parties argued about principles and rights in the territories between Poland and Russia, waiting for developments at the front. The Soviet side insisted on the border along the "Curzon Line", and the Polish side insisted on the line mentioned in the Soviet statement of January 28, 1920. In the meantime, on August 19, the Soviet side put forward to the Polish delegation their terms of the peace agreement. The RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR confirmed the independence of Poland, and proposed the "Curzon Line" as a border with some deviations in favor of Poland in the area of Bialystok and Kholm. Warsaw was required to reduce the army to 50 thousand people within a month, create a workers' militia, transfer excess weapons to the Red Army and stop their production. Poland was forbidden to let forces hostile to the RSFSR through its territory and receive military assistance from abroad. It was proposed to stop hostilities 72 hours after the signing of the truce. During this time, the troops of the parties were to be withdrawn to the "Curzon Line": the Red Army was stationed on this line, and the Polish troops - 50 km west of it. In the neutral zone, the jurisdiction of the Polish civil administration was maintained under the control of the mixed Soviet-Polish commission. Poland was supposed to return the stolen property, restore bridges, roads, etc., and donate land to families affected by the war. For its part, the Soviet side undertook, after the completion of the demobilization of the Polish troops, to leave no more than 200 thousand military personnel on the border with Poland<sup>253</sup>.

The defeat of the Red Army near Warsaw and the preparation of a new Polish offensive eastward to the Russian-German front line of 1915, approved by the government on August 27, led to the fact that the negotiations did not move a single step. On August 28, the Polish government decided to intensify propaganda showing the injustice of the "Curzon Line", but even the Entente countries spoke in the sense that this line should be the basis of Poland's eastern border. Moreover, Warsaw was told that Vilna should be kept by Lithuania. To a certain extent, this position of the West was due to the fact that the Entente made a bet on Wrangel, who, in exchange for its support, recognized royal debts, granted the West the right to operate railways in European Russia, collect customs and port duties in all ports of the Black and Azov Seas, obtaining all surpluses of grain in Ukraine and Kuban, 2D of oil and gasoline and 1/4 of Donbass coal production<sup>254</sup>. It is clear that such an agreement made it obvious that the White Cause was a form of foreign enslavement of the country. At the same time, all attempts to coordinate actions between Poland, Petliura and Wrangel through the mediation of the Entente came to nothing. Nevertheless, the fierce fighting in Northern Tavria, which had unfolded since August 12, gradually attracted more and more attention from Moscow. This became especially obvious after the defeat near Warsaw, so the Soviet side tried to quickly complete negotiations with Poland by reaching a peace agreement.

It is clear that in the conditions of a successful offensive, the Polish delegation was in no hurry to respond. Meanwhile, the command of the Western Front accused the Polish delegation of disrupting the conclusion of a peace agreement and conducting intelligence activities. Naturally, the head of the Polish delegation stated that

"the delegation is forced to abandon further negotiations" 255 . Only the intervention of Moscow, which still hoped that, despite the defeat near Warsaw, it would be possible to force Poland to an agreement and thereby complete, as it has now become obvious, the unsuccessful Polish campaign, made it possible to smooth the situation after the official apology of the Soviet side<sup>256</sup> . On August 23, the Polish delegation gave a negative answer to all Soviet proposals. The next week brought no progress in the negotiations. As a result, on September 2, the parties agreed to move the negotiations to Riga, and their delegations left Minsk. **To the East** In the meantime, by August 25, the front had stabilized along the line

Augustow-Lipsk-Kuznitsa-Vistloch Belovezh-Zhabinka-Opalin. As early as August 19, when the troops of the Western Front had already retreated from Warsaw, the 1st Cavalry Army began to withdraw from Lvov. However, feeling the weakening of the onslaught of the Soviet troops, the enemy launched a number of counterattacks, and on August 21-24, the Cavalry units had to support their neighbors . Trotsky's directive of August 20, which demanded "energetic and immediate assistance from the cavalry to the Western Front," did not add clarity, but called "special attention of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army to ensure that the occupation of Lvov itself does not affect the deadline for the implementation of these orders"<sup>258</sup> . Thus, instead of a clear order to stop Lvov's attack, Moscow again limited itself to a vague order. Not to mention the fact that now the transfer of the 1st Cavalry Army was no longer needed. Moreover, on August 25, the 1st Cavalry Army, by order of the commander-in-chief, was thrown into a raid on Zamosc, which had neither meaning nor purpose.

Although the city was taken, prolonged rains, fatigue of the personnel, lack of ammunition and active actions of the enemy, who sought to surround the army, led to the fact that on the night of August 31, Soviet troops retreated to the east. In the sharply changed strategic situation, the actions of the 1st Cavalry could no longer play a significant role and were doomed to failure . The strategic initiative passed to the Polish

troops. However, at the beginning of September, a lull settled on the front: the sides put the troops in order and regrouped. By September 1, the Soviet Western Front consisted of 6 armies, 19 rifle, 4 cavalry divisions, 1 rifle and 5 cavalry brigades (Table 15). In total, these troops numbered 81,322 infantry fighters and 16,943 cavalry fighters, 1,835 machine guns and 404 guns. The front headquarters believed that the enemy had 102 thousand bayonets and 18,930 sabers, 2,535 machine guns and 820 guns<sup>260</sup> . The administration of the 4th Army, which had lost almost all of its troops, led the troops of the Mozyr Group, which commanded the remnants of the troops of the 4th Army, which became the reserve group of the front. **Table 15 Combat composition of the Western Front on September 1, 1920 of the Army Divisions, brigades** 3rd 5th, 6th, 21st, 56th SD 2nd,

11th, 16th, 27th SD , cbr 8th, 10th, 17th, 48th SD 55th, 57th SD, 142nd

brigade, 2nd division. KBR, 13th

KBR, Consolidated neg. 7th, 24th,

15th 25th, 44th, 58th SD, Bashkir

16th KBR 1st Cavalry 4th,

4th 6th, 11th, 14th KD, Det. cbd

12th

Although the command of the Western Front lost the Battle of Warsaw, it believed that the troops could once again try to take the capital of Poland. The idea arose to send troops of the 12th, 14th and 1st Cavalry armies to Lvov and push the enemy back to the Lyubaczów-Sambir line, which was supposed to pull the Polish troops covering the Warsaw direction to the south. In the meantime, the replenished and rested troops of the right wing of the Western Front will be able to go on the offensive and, together with the troops of the southern group, defeat the enemy near Warsaw. However, these ideas did not find support among the commander-in-chief, who was against the new involvement of the 1st Cavalry in the battles for Lvov and on September 5 demanded that it be left in the Grubeshov area for an attack on Lublin<sup>261</sup>. If we take into account that by September 4 in the 1st Cavalry there were only

about 13 thousand soldiers exhausted in previous battles, then one cannot but recognize the caution of the commander in chief justified. Moreover, the calm at the front was relative.

On September 1-6, Polish troops pushed back the Soviet units of the 12th Army to the east of the river. Western Bug south of Brest-Litovsk. Attempts by the 4th and 12th armies to restore the situation failed. Moreover, units of the 4th Army also began to retreat to the east, and on September 12, Polish troops took Kobrin and Kovel. Thus, the enemy managed to separate the 4th and 12th armies, the adjacent flanks of which ended up in the impenetrable Polesie. On September 14, the Poles drove out Soviet units from Vladimir-Volynsky, and on 16

September occupied Lutsk. The 12th Army, unable to stop the enemy, retreated eastward to pp. Styr and Stokhod, exposing the northern flank of the 14th Army, on the front of which the enemy showed himself weakly. On September 18, the Poles occupied Rovno and Tarnopol.

Meanwhile, in Belarus, on September 14, Polish troops began to push the troops of the 16th Army to Volkovysk and on September 19 occupied Pruzhany. To the north of Grodno, on September 3, the Lithuanian units pushed the Poles back to Suwalki, which, however, did not prevent them from carrying out several attacks against the Soviet 3rd Army on September 20. On September 21, the 12th and 1st Cavalry Armies were again transferred to the Southwestern Front, from which troops were detached to fight against Wrangel, the elimination of which became the main task of the Red Army<sup>262</sup>. At this time, the command of the Western Front still did not lose hope of going over to the offensive, but the main command offered to wait<sup>263</sup>. On September 24, the 2nd Polish Army, pushing back the Lithuanian troops, crossed the Neman north of Grodno, bypassing the right flank of the 3rd Soviet Army. On the same day, the high command assigned the troops of the Western Front the task of holding back the enemy west of the river. Shara. The Southwestern Front also received an order to defend itself and wait for the reserves to approach after the liberation of the Crimea, where the 1st Cavalry Army was transferred. In extreme cases, the troops of the front could withdraw to the line Korosten-Zhytomyr-Berdichev-Zhmerinka<sup>264</sup>.

Attempts by the command of the Western Front to establish cooperation with the Lithuanian command again proved futile, as the parties tried to use each other against the Poles. By the morning of September 25, the 3rd Army withdrew beyond the Neman, retaining bridgeheads on its western bank, and tried to create a new front against Druskeniki, occupied by the Poles. However, the Soviet divisions could not complete the excessively large transitions in time, and the Poles managed to go into the rear of the 3rd Army to Lida. Under these conditions, at 20.45 on September 25, the front command ordered the troops of the 3rd Army to withdraw to Lida, and 265 troops of the 15th and 16th armies to the river. Shar, the Soviet . Poorly organized marches caused divisions of the 3rd Army often had to break through the barriers of the Polish units. Having outstripped the retreating Soviet troops, the Poles occupied Lida on September 28, which forced the Soviet command to withdraw the 3rd Army south of the city. The fighting during the marches gradually weakened the units of the 3rd Army, the right flank of which the Poles constantly bypassed through Lithuanian territory. Therefore, on September 28, the front command ordered the troops to be withdrawn to the line of the old German trenches . Meanwhile, on September 23, Polish units occupied Volkovysk, but were driven out of the city by units of the 27th Soviet division, which left it on September 26 in connection with a general withdrawal to the river. Shara. On the same day, the 16th Army left Baranovich. As a result, the front of the 4th Army turned out to be the most advanced to the west, which was used by Bulak Balakhovich, whose detachment broke through to Pinsk on September 26 and captured the city. The headquarters of the 4th Army, which was located there, fled in a panic and lost control of its troops, which, however, did not prevent them from retreating in an organized manner to the river. Yaselda <sup>267</sup> .

In Ukraine, the command of the Southwestern Front, given that the troops of the 12th Army had already retreated to East,

On September 17, he ordered the withdrawal of parts of the 14th Army to pp. Ikva and Seret<sup>268</sup>. Later, the 14th Army retreated to the river. Zbruch, and by September 24 reached the Starokonstantinov-Proskurov-Staraya Ushitsa line. By September 25, the troops of the 12th Army entrenched themselves on the river. Goryn, but there were not enough forces for defense, and by September 30 she withdrew to pp. Clean up and Sluch. On October 3, the command of the Western Front offered the commander-in-chief permission to withdraw troops to the line of Lake. Naroch - Smorgon - Molodechno - Krasnoye - Izyaslav - Samokhvalovichi - Romanovo - r. Case by October 5th. In response to this proposal, the commander-in-chief reasonably pointed out that the withdrawal of troops to this line would make it difficult for the Soviet delegation to negotiate in Riga, therefore, the maximum possible territory should be retained<sup>269</sup>. Then the command of the Western and Southwestern <sup>270</sup> push the enemy , fronts decided a little, but the Poles, having forestalled the Soviet attacks, again bypassed the right flank of the 3rd Army, forcing it to retreat to the river. Western Lithuanian territory on October 15, the Poles occupied Minsk, but Dvina<sup>271</sup>. On the 17th they left the city, retreating to the

demarcation line. The defeat of the Red Army near Warsaw became a cold shower for the Soviet leadership. Already on August 30, Stalin proposed to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) to create "a commission of 3 people to examine the conditions of our July offensive and August retreat on the Western Front"<sup>272</sup>. However, on September 1, Trotsky at a meeting of the Politburo managed to reject this proposal. Based on the military situation, the Soviet leadership decided to move "to the policy of a compromising peace with Poland"<sup>273</sup>. The Soviet side was looking for an explanation for what had happened in the then popular idea of international solidarity of workers. For example, on September 4, Voroshilov noted in a letter to G.K. Ordzhonikidze that "we expected uprisings and revolutions from the Polish

hatred for "Russians". Of course, if we managed to get to ŸódŸ-Petrokow and the Dombrowski district, the situation would change dramatically [would], but so far things are rather unimportant"274 .

However, the main discussion flared up at the IX Conference of the RCP(b) (September 22-25, 1920). Trying to soften the shock of the defeat, Lenin structured the political report of the Central Committee of the party in the spirit of discussing the general international situation in connection with the Red Army's campaign against Warsaw. He acknowledged that since "we have suffered ... a gigantic, unheard-of defeat," it means that a mistake has been made either in policy or in strategy. However, the Central Committee decided not to go into details - "let historians decide [mysteries] of the past, let them sort this issue out later." Perhaps, Lenin declared, Curzon's note should have been accepted and Eastern Galicia obtained, which would have become an important base for operations in Central Europe. Perhaps "this was a political mistake, for which the Central Committee in general is responsible, and for which each of us takes responsibility." Therefore, "we will not create a commission to study the conditions of advance and retreat. To study this issue, we do not have the strength to do so. We now have a number of other issues that require an immediate solution." In order to avoid another winter campaign, it is necessary to make peace with Poland and defeat Wrangel .

Equally streamlined was Trotsky's report, which also focused on the fact that the campaign against Warsaw was "a big attempt to sound out the enemy" and, if possible, Sovietize Poland. Noting that the local population on the line of the Western Bug, at best, reacted neutrally to the arrival of Soviet troops, the chairman of the RVSR justified the need for a campaign to the Vistula by the desire to get support from the Polish proletariat. "The question of where to stay was not even in the Central Committee." However, the rapid advance of troops with a poorly functioning rear and practically no replenishment led to the fact that "human material came into a state of some hypnosis, or somnambulism." Under these conditions, the enemy counterattack led to one of the greatest catastrophes that we have ever experienced on our military fronts. It's undeniable." In the debate on the reports, the representatives of the army party organizations from the

fronts, as a rule, demanded an investigation into the activities of the High Command, while the representatives of the rear party organizations opposed, limiting themselves to stating the fact of an error. In his speech, Stalin recalled that the decision to continue the attack on Warsaw was made by the Central Committee against the backdrop of three main factors: 1) Curzon's note, 2) the revolutionary movement in Europe, and 3) our successes on the fronts. Having asked the fronts about the state of the troops, Moscow received an answer that Warsaw would be taken on August 16. On this basis, the Central Committee made a revolutionary and politically quite logical decision to continue the offensive. However, wrong strategic premises led to disaster. In his concluding remarks, Trotsky, of course, reminded Stalin that the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front also sent optimistic telegrams to Moscow. On the evening of September 22, Stalin sent a note to the presidium of the conference, in which he indicated

that in his articles in Pravda he was rather cautious in assessing the prospects for the Warsaw campaign. The calculation of the RVS of the Southwestern Front for the capture of Lvov did not materialize, because the 1st Cavalry was sent to the north. Rejecting reproaches of his partiality to the command of the Western Front, Stalin noted that the point was not that we did not take Warsaw on August 16, but "that the Western Front, it turns out, was facing a catastrophe due to the fatigue of the soldiers, due to the lack of rear support, but the command did not know, did not notice. If the command had warned the Central Committee about the actual state of the front, the Central Committee would undoubtedly have temporarily abandoned the offensive war, as it is doing now. The "unprecedented disaster" that took 100,000 prisoners and 200 guns from us is already a big oversight of the command, which cannot be ignored. That is why I demanded in the Central Committee the appointment of a commission, which, having found out the causes of the catastrophe, would insure us against a new defeat. Tov. Lenin, apparently, spares the command, but I think that it is necessary to spare the cause, not the command. Having received the floor on the morning of September 23, Stalin generally conveyed these considerations to the delegates of the conference. However, the debate on this issue ended, confirming the long-known rule: "Victory has many fathers, and defeat is always an orphan." In its resolution on the political report of the Central Committee, the conference spoke in favor of negotiations with Poland .

Meanwhile, in Warsaw on September 11, the issue of the composition and powers of the delegation at the talks with Moscow in Riga was being decided. The main issue was, of course, the question of the border. The Polish military insisted on getting a line along the Dnieper, but in the end it was decided to limit the armistice line along the river. Zbruch-r. Stviga - east of Rovno-Luninets-Baranovichi. The delegation received the right to move this line to the east, conclude a truce and a preliminary agreement and negotiate with the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR. At the same time, Warsaw could not but heed the advice of Paris and was in no hurry to reach an agreement. On September 12, the Soviet delegation arrived in Riga, and on September 19, the Polish delegation. On September 21, the parties began negotiations ,277 which took place against the backdrop of the offensive of the Polish troops on



Volhynia and Belarus. Since it turned out that the Soviet troops were not able to change the situation on the Polish front, and fierce battles with Wrangel's troops continued in the south, Moscow was forced to seek a compromise. On September 23, on behalf of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, it was announced that the RSFSR agreed to the border along the line of the river. Shara-Oginsky Canal-r. Yaselda - r. Styr and further along the border of Eastern Galicia, but peace must be concluded within 10 days (until October 5)<sup>278</sup>. On September 28, the Soviet draft preliminary agreement was handed over to the Polish delegation and the border was proposed along the line from the mouth of the river. Svis-loch - Rudnya - Belovezh - Kamenets-Litovsk - Brest-Litovsk - Pisha - Lyuboml - Vladimir-Volynsky - Gribovitsa and further along the former Austro-Russian border to the Dniester<sup>279</sup>. Since it was necessary to strengthen the troops operating against Wrangel, Moscow sought to quickly complete the matter with a peace agreement, but the Polish side was in no hurry. On October 1, Warsaw considered the Soviet proposals unacceptable, but decided to seek a truce, since the winter campaign of the Polish army was not needed.

On October 2, the Polish delegation in Riga put forward its proposals on the border, the line of which was to pass along the river. Zbruch-Rovno-Sarny-Luninets-west of Minsk-Vileika-Disna and cut off Lithuania from the RSFSR. The Soviet delegation insisted on its proposal of 28 September. It is clear that such divergent proposals would be extremely difficult to reconcile, and in the conditions of the further retreat of the Red Army, a long dispute was not in the interests of Moscow, and on October 4 it was decided to give in. On October 5, the Polish delegation was informed that the Soviet side agreed with its proposal for a border line. At the same time, the Soviet delegation put forward the following conditions: 1) sign the agreement before October 8, 2) Poland recognized the right of the RSFSR to transit through its territory to Lithuania and Germany, and 3) refuse to include in the agreement provisions on the payment of an amount in gold to Poland under the title of active participation Polish lands in the economic life of the Russian Empire, replacing it with a mention that the calculation will be made. The Polish delegation agreed, but demanded that a protocol be signed on the consent of the RSFSR to pay Poland a certain amount in gold and provide it with concessions on account of payments. After receiving the consent of Moscow and the coordination of documents on October 12 at 19.30, a preliminary peace was signed between Poland and the RSFSR with the Ukrainian SSR. The parties recognized

mutual independence, the desire for non-interference in internal affairs, the refusal to support actions hostile to each other and renounced mutual financial claims, except for the recognition of Poland's participation in the economic life of the Russian Empire and in its gold reserves. Poland was to be given cultural and historical values evacuated from the Kingdom of Poland both before and during the First World War. An armistice agreement was also signed, which came into force on October 18, 1920.<sup>280</sup> All these agreements were ratified by the Ukrainian SSR on October 20, Poland on October 22, and the RSFSR on October 23. The treaty entered into force after the exchange of instruments of ratification, which took place on November 2 in Libava (Liepaja). Polish troops were withdrawn to the demarcation line, and the Soviet units entered Minsk, Slutsk, Proskurov and Kamenets Podolsky. In general, according to Polish statistics, Poland received western Belarusian lands with a population of 3987 thousand people, of which about 3 million were Belarusians, and western Ukrainian territories with about 10 million people, of which almost half were Ukrainians. True, given that Polish statistics recorded as Poles all persons of the Catholic and Uniate faith, the proportion of the ethnic Polish population in these "eastern outskirts" was only about 10%<sup>281</sup>. From 24.00 on October 18, hostilities ceased and the troops of the parties began to disengage in accordance with

preliminary agreement      <sup>282</sup> By October 20, the Southwestern Front held the line pp. Ubort and Sluch - Salnitsa - Litin - Mezhirov - Nosovetskaya - r. Murafa. In Podolia, the Petliura units tried to seize the territory on which the independence of the UNR could be proclaimed. On November 12, they occupied the city of Litin, but within a week by November 21 they were driven out of it and retreated to Poland beyond the river. Zbruch. In Polissya, on November 6, Bulak-Balakhovich's detachment became more active, numbering up to 8 thousand bayonets and 3 thousand sabers, 150 machine guns and 36 guns, which captured Mozyr on November 10, and Kalinkovichi on November 11. On November 17, the Soviet units were able to defend Rechitsa from Bulak-Balakhovich and liberate Kalinkovichi. On November 20, Soviet troops entered Mozyr, but they failed to encircle and destroy Bulak-Balakhovich's detachment, and on

November 22

he crossed the Polish border. **Compromise** The refusal of the Polish leadership to support Wrangel and Petliura in exchange for obtaining territories in the East allowed the Soviet leadership to transfer the main forces of the Red Army to the south and by November 16, 1920, defeat the Wrangel troops and end the Civil War in the European part of the country. However, Poland still had to sign a final peace treaty. Naturally,

that the parties tried to fulfill the signed preliminary agreement on the basis of reciprocity. Thus, it took Moscow quite a long time to convince Warsaw to comply with the provision of the agreement on the termination of support for the military detachments of Bulak-Balakhovich, Savinkov and Petliura, who continued to be based on Polish territory. Formally, the Polish leadership issued orders to cease cooperation with these formations and withdraw them outside Poland within 2 weeks. But the real implementation of these orders began only after these detachments were driven out of Soviet territory in the 20th of November. Moreover, in the regions of Lithuania bordering the BSSR, occupied by Poland, by December 1920, the 59,000-strong army of General Zheligovsky was concentrated, who back in October was officially declared a "rebel" by Warsaw.

It is clear that this created a certain nervousness in Moscow and did not contribute to the negotiations resumed on November 17 in Riga on the <sup>284</sup>. The Soviet side repeatedly demanded Guard detachments and the withdrawal of Zheligovsky's army to the rear. Demobilization moods grew in the Polish army itself, and in some units Soldiers' Councils even arose, which, however, were quickly dispersed by the command. In addition, the Polish military command demanded from the political leadership not to withdraw troops from the front and provided support to anti-Soviet formations. Already on November 14, the Soviet side declared to Poland that it would strictly comply with all the terms of the agreement, which it also demands from Warsaw. Under these conditions, the Polish leadership was finally able to disarm the White Guard formations, without preventing, however, part of the Petliura detachments from leaving for Romania, from where they carried out raids on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. During the negotiations in Riga, the Polish side, of course, rejected all reproaches of the Soviet delegation for non-fulfillment of the agreements.

In this situation, the Soviet command did not rule out the possibility of resuming the war in the West in the spring of 1921. However, the maintenance of the armed forces numbering 5,427,273 people in the country devastated by the Civil War was difficult, and already on November 25, 1920, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RVSR) ordered the High Command to develop a plan to reduce the Red Army by 2 million people and by January 15, 1921 keep on contentment of 3.5 million people. However, in the report of the Chief of Staff P.P. Lebedev No. 1108/org dated December 1, 1920, it was proposed to reduce the size of the armed forces to 3.3 million people. When reducing the army, it should be taken into account that "although hostilities on the external front have already ceased, the general political situation continues to be such that it is necessary to be ready for the rapid opening of hostilities on a large scale, and in any case, we must prepare for this by spring." Therefore, it was necessary to "preserve a powerful field army by reducing the rear and the entire service element, as well as the internal service troops." This proposal was approved by the RVSR protocol No. 125 of December 6

1920<sup>286</sup> On March 30, 1921, by a resolution of the Council of Labor and Defense (STO), the Labor Armies were transferred from the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs to the People's Commissariat for Labor. Accordingly, the total number of personnel of the Soviet armed forces decreased by July 1, 1921 to 2,009,321 people, and by January 1, 1922 - to 1,354,516 people<sup>287</sup>. In the meantime, the main issue at the

negotiations in Riga was the economic and financial agreement. The Polish delegation tried to get as much as possible from the Soviet side, and the Soviet delegation, of course, was in no hurry to make concessions to Warsaw. At this time, Poland was trying to get help from France, but Paris was busy with its own affairs. For Poland's participation in the economic life of the Russian Empire, the Polish delegation demanded 300 million rubles. in gold, and the Soviet side agreed to pay 30 million. Poland also demanded the transfer of 2,000 steam locomotives and a large number of wagons, in addition to 255 steam locomotives, 435 passenger and 8,859 freight wagons stolen during the war. Also, the Polish delegation put forward new territorial requirements in Ukraine: Proskurov, Kamenets-Podolsky, Novo-Konstantinov and Novou Shitsk. It is clear that such demands only complicated the negotiations and created the possibility of their failure. Considering that at that time the press wrote quite a lot about the Entente organizing a new campaign against Soviet Russia, Poland, with the help of England and France, rearmed its army and on February 21, 1921 concluded a military alliance with France directed against Germany and the RSFSR, it is understandable that Moscow had to make certain concessions. In

addition, all this fueled the fears of the Soviet command regarding the outbreak of war in the spring of 1921. Therefore, Moscow decided to play it safe. On February 13, 1921, Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army Kamenev sent M.V. Frunze directive No. 803 / op / ss, which indicated that ***"the military-political situation on the western borders of the RSFSR, perhaps in the near future, will put the Red Army again before the armed protection of the borders"***

**RSFSR".** The White Guard formations on the territory of Poland and Wrangel's army were named as probable opponents. **"However, the possibility is not ruled out that after the performance of the White Guard formations and the army of Wrangel, the armies of the states of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, neighboring us in the west, will enter into an armed struggle with us."** The strongest adversaries would be Poland and Romania, while the rest of the western neighbors would either become allies of Poland or remain neutral. The Soviet command believed that the white formations on the territory of

Poland (about 50 thousand people) had the opportunity to operate both in Ukraine and in Belarus. Wrangel's army (70-120 thousand people) could land on the Black Sea coast with the help of the fleet. In the event of war, Poland would field from 42 to 63 divisions, Romania - 27 divisions and 1 brigade, Finland - up to 9 infantry divisions, Estonia - 3 infantry divisions, Latvia - 5 infantry divisions and Lithuania - 4 infantry divisions. It was believed that Poland would concentrate the main forces (26-36 divisions) north of Polesie, and to the south it would deploy 12-24 divisions. The entry into the war on the side of Poland, Latvia or Romania, will further strengthen the Polish grouping in Belarus. Romanian troops can act jointly with the Polish in the direction of Kyiv and Yekaterinoslav. Finland and Estonia will seek to occupy Petrograd, Murmansk and Karelia. Latvia and Lithuania - to act on the flanks of the Polish army.

**"Our common task in the west is to defend the borders of the RSFSR from the invasion of enemies. In accordance with the above military-political situation, our armed forces in the west must: "a) repel an armed invasion**

**and inflict a decisive defeat on the White Guard formations produced on the territory of our neighboring states, as well as repel any landing attempts by the Wrangel army on our Black Sea shores;**

**b) inflict a decisive defeat on the armies of states neighboring us, if they declared war on us.** The directive indicated

several options for the operational actions of the Soviet troops, depending on the general situation. In the event that only white formations would become the only enemy of the Red Army, the troops of the Western Front and the Kyiv Military District (KVO) should have been ready to defeat them on their own. If necessary, army directorates will be separated from the directorates of the Kyiv and Kharkov (KhVO) military districts, and the directorate of the KVO will be deployed to the directorate of the South-Western Front. The repulsion of a possible landing of the Wrangel army was assigned to the headquarters of the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea. Headquarters were required to carefully develop issues of mobilization deployment so that rifle divisions could be mobilized in 7 days, and divisions rolled up into brigades in 14 days. The cavalry needed to be kept in states close to wartime states. The main method of concentrating troops should be a campaign, and transportation by rail should be planned based on 5 pairs of trains per day. Option "3" provided for a situation of war only with Poland. In this case, the commander-in-chief pointed to

the presence of two equivalent options for the actions of the Soviet troops:

**"a) inflicting the main blow north of Polesie in the general direction on the Osovets-Bialystok line - Brest with a simultaneous offensive to the south of Polissia on Brest - Lvov (1st option);**

**b) delivering the main blow south of Polissya in the direction of the Brest-Lublin-Sandomierz front with support in the Lvov-Krakow direction and a simultaneous offensive on the Western Front or an active defense here (2nd option).** In the case of the

implementation of the 1st option, the commander-in-chief determined the following tasks of the fronts. The Western Front was supposed to carry out: **"a) covering the borders; b) ensuring the mobilization and concentration of the armies of the front; c) inflicting a decisive defeat on the Polish troops with an offensive in the general direction to the Osovets-Bialystok-Brest-Litovsk front.** The front included:

2nd, 5th, 4th, 8th, 16th, 17th, 27th, 48th, 6th, 10th, 21st,

26th, 1st I, 30th, 2nd Don, 22nd, 55th, 34th, 31st, 9th rifle divisions, 2nd cavalry corps (2nd, 16th, 21st cavalry divisions) and the 15th cavalry division (total: sd - 20, cd - 4). After clarifying the situation on the borders with Finland, Estonia and Latvia, the 11th and 56th rifle divisions will be sent to the front. In addition to the administration of the 16th Army, another army administration was detached from the front headquarters and 3 more were transferred from the Moscow (MVO), Orel (Oryol) and Volga military districts (PriVO).

The Southwestern Front was supposed to carry out: **"a) covering the borders; b) ensuring the mobilization and concentration of the armies of the front; c) assistance by an offensive in the general direction to the Brest-Litovsk-Lvov front to the decisive offensive of the Western Front.** As part of the Southwestern Front

stood out: 12th, 24th, 25th, 44th, 41st, 60th, 58th, 45th, 3rd, 42nd, 33rd, 3rd Turkestan rifle divisions, 1st cavalry corps (8th, 17th cavalry

divisions), 3rd cavalry corps (5th, 7th, 9th cavalry divisions) and 1st cavalry army (4th, 6th -I, 11th, 14th and 19th cavalry divisions) (total: sd - 12, cd - 10). Frontal and one army departments are created on the basis of the KVO department. Two more army departments were allocated from the KhVO and Omsk.

The commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and the Crimea was entrusted with securing the border with Romania and the Black Sea coast. The 52nd, 15th, 51st, 46th rifle divisions and the International Cavalry Brigade remained at his disposal (total: sd - 4, cd - i / s). To control these troops, an army command was to be allocated from the headquarters of the Caucasian Front. The operational option

**"SW" (2nd option) provided for the concentration of the main forces of the Red Army south of Polesie. In this case, the offensive of the Western Front became assistance to the "resolute offensive of the Southwestern Front. In the event of the transition of superior enemy forces to the offensive - active defense, with the main task of covering the Smolensk-Moscow direction, while at the same time ensuring the right flank of the army of the Southwestern Front.** It was supposed to separate the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th,

16th, 27th, 17th, 48th, 6th, 10th, 21st, 26th, 1st rifle divisions, 2nd cavalry corps (2nd, 16th yu, 21st cavalry divisions) and 15th cavalry divisions (total: sd - 13, cd - 4). If necessary, it was planned to reinforce the troops of the front with the 11th and 56th rifle divisions.

In addition to the control of the 16th Army, another 1 army control was allocated from the headquarters of the front, and 1 arrived

from the Moscow Military District. In this version, the task of the troops of the Southwestern Front was **"inflicting a decisive defeat on the Polish troops with an offensive in the general direction to the Brest-Litovsk-Lublin-Sandomierz front with support in the direction of Lvov-Krakow."** The 12th, 24th, 25th, 41st, 44th, 45th, 58th, 60th, 7th, 55th, 3rd, 31st I, 33rd, 34th, 30th, 42nd, 22nd, 2nd Don rifle divisions, 1st cavalry corps (8th, 17th cavalry divisions), 3rd cavalry corps (5th, 7th, 9th cavalry divisions) and 1st Cavalry Army (4th, 6th, 11th, 14th, 19th cavalry divisions) (total: sd - 18, cd - 10). The Front Directorate and 1 Army Directorate were separated from the headquarters of the KVO, and 3 more Army Directorates were transferred from the KhVO, ORVO and PriVO.

The commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, as before, was tasked with securing the border with Romania and the Black Sea coast to Kerch. For this, the 51st, 52nd, 15th and 46th rifle divisions and the International Cavalry Brigade were allocated (total: sd - 4, cd - 1/3).

The "PR" option provided that "when Poland comes out together with Romania, with the partial participation or neutrality of a group of northern neighboring states, our plan is based on inflicting a decisive defeat on the most powerful and dangerous army of Poland and expectant actions against Romania remote from the main objects of the war." In this case, the Western Front should strike the main blow in Belarus. The front includes the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 16th, 17th, 27th, 48th, 21st, 6th, 10th, 2nd I Donskaya, 22nd, 31st, 7th, 34th, 1st, 26th, 29th, 3rd Turkestan Rifle Divisions, 2nd Cavalry Corps (2nd,

16th I, 21st cavalry division) and 15th cavalry division

(total: sd - 20, cd - 4). In addition, it was planned to strengthen the troops of the front with the 11th and 56th rifle divisions. In addition to the 16th Army, another 1 army department was allocated from the front headquarters and 3 army departments arrived from the Moscow Military District, Ory Military District and PriVO. The troops of the Southwestern

Front were to contribute to the offensive of the Western Front by actions in Eastern Galicia and at the same time conduct an active defense against Romania and defend the Black Sea coast to Kerch. The 3rd, 12th, 15th, 24th, 25th, 41st, 44th, 45th, 51st, 52nd, 55th, 58th I, 60th, 30th, 42nd, 46th, 18th, 33rd rifle divisions, 1st cavalry corps (8th, 17th cavalry divisions), 3rd cavalry corps ( 5th, 7th, 9th cavalry divisions) and 1st Cavalry Army (4th, 6th, 11th, 14th, 19th cavalry divisions) and the International Cavalry Brigade (total: sd - 18 , cd - 10 1 / z) - The headquarters of the front was created from the headquarters of the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, 1 army department was separated from the headquarters of the KVO and KhVO, and 1 army department arrived from Omsk. The Commander-in-Chief demanded that the developed plans of operations for all these cases be submitted no later than March 15, 1921.<sup>288</sup>

Accordingly, the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, by his directive No. 2812 / no / ss of February 25, demanded that the headquarters of the KVO and KhVO by March 10 submit their views on these options for the actions of the Soviet troops<sup>289</sup> . In pursuance of this directive, on March 23-24, the headquarters of the KVO prepared reports on two options for the actions of the troops in the event of a war with Poland. The reports noted that the existing deployment of the district troops does not allow to quickly organize counteraction to the advancing enemy and cover the deployment of friendly troops. That's why

it was proposed that the cavalry units of the district "be transferred now to the Kazatin-Berdichev region and even to the west, so that they could fulfill their main task of tactics - to cover the strategic deployment of armies and not allow the enemy's cavalry masses to go unpunished, immediately after declaring war, proceed to defeat our rear." Bye

The 1st cavalry corps will tie down the enemy, the approaching 1st cavalry army must break through the front and advance along the Zhytomyr-Rovno-Kovel line, and the concentrated 3rd cavalry corps will operate along the Vinnitsa-Proskurov-Tarnopol line, which will eventually allow the troops to complete the task front. However, in the end, these<sup>290</sup>. plans were not needed.

Despite the fact that France generally supported the Polish policy of dragging out the Riga negotiations, it did not recognize the eastern border of Poland. The desire of Paris to create a single anti-Soviet cordon between the Baltic and Black Seas ran into the unwillingness of the Baltic countries to get closer to Poland because of the unclear prospects for its relations with the RSFSR. The proposal was treated with equal caution.

about a military alliance with Poland and in Bucharest. Only on March 3, 1921, Romania announced its consent to the conclusion of a defensive military convention with Poland. Despite all these difficulties, the negotiations in Riga continued. On February 24, the parties signed a protocol on the extension of the truce until the exchange of instruments of ratification of the peace treaty, the repatriation agreement and the mixed border commission<sup>291</sup>. The Polish delegation agreed to the 30 million gold rubles offered by Moscow, but demanded 12 thousand square meters. km. As a result, a compromise was reached, and about

3 thousand sq. km in Polissya and on the banks of the river. Western Dvina. The parties agreed to the transfer of 300 locomotives, 435 passenger and 8100 freight cars to

Poland. In addition, the foreign policy situation of the RSFSR was gradually changing. On February 26, 1921, Soviet Russia signed a friendship treaty with Persia, and on February 28, with Afghanistan. On March 16, a trade treaty with England and a treaty of friendship with Turkey were signed. At the same time, Moscow also had enough difficulties associated with the internal situation of the country, emerging from the state of the Civil War. On the other hand, the Polish Sejm in February demanded that the government conclude a peace treaty with its eastern neighbor. The result of the Soviet-Polish negotiations was the Riga Peace Treaty, signed at 20.30 on March 18, 1921. The parties pledged to respect each other's state sovereignty, not to create or support organizations fighting with the other side. A procedure for the option of citizens was envisaged. The Soviet side undertook to pay Poland 30 million rubles in gold in coins or bullion and to transfer the train and other property worth 18,245 thousand rubles in gold. Poland was released from the debts of the Russian Empire, and negotiations on an economic agreement were envisaged. Diplomatic relations were established between the parties. The agreement was ratified by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR on April 14, by the Polish Sejm on April 15, and by the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian SSR on April 17, 1921. On April 30, after the exchange of instruments of ratification in Minsk, the agreement entered into force<sup>293</sup>. Soviet the Polish war is over.

Unfortunately, the losses of the Parties in the war of 1919-1920 are still not clear. General losses of the Red Army in the campaign of 1920 are estimated at 232 thousand people, and the Polish Army - at 184,246 people<sup>294</sup>. In 1919—1920s Polish troops took prisoner more than 146 thousand Red Army soldiers, whose content in Poland was very far from any humanitarian standards. Communists or those suspected of belonging to them were subjected to special humiliation, and captured German Red Army soldiers were generally shot on the spot. But even ordinary prisoners often became victims of the arbitrariness of the Polish military authorities. Robbery of prisoners, mockery of captured women was widespread. Apparently, such an attitude towards Soviet prisoners of war was largely the result of many years of propaganda of Russia's "guilt" before Poland. All this led to the fact that about 60 thousand Soviet prisoners of war died in Polish camps. By November 21, 1921, 75,699 former prisoners of war returned from Poland (932 people refused to return), and 40,986 internees from Germany. There were about 60,000 Polish prisoners in Soviet Russia (apparently this number also includes civilian prisoners, hostages and internees), and their content was not intended to destroy or humiliate them. On the contrary, the vast majority of prisoners were considered as "brothers in class" and any reprisals against them were simply unthinkable. Political work in the prisoner-of-war camps pursued the goal of developing a "class" consciousness in them. Of course, it cannot be denied that in the conditions of hostilities there were individual excesses against prisoners, especially officers, but the Soviet command sought to stop them and punish those responsible. Contained

prisoners in the RSFSR, of course, was affected by the general economic devastation. At the end of the war, 27,598 former prisoners of war returned to Poland, and about 2,000 remained in the RSFSR<sup>295</sup> .

## Part two. ON COUNTER COURSES. (march 1921 - August 1939)

The signing of the Riga Peace Treaty led to the establishment of the eastern border of Poland, but the determination of the rest of the country's borders did not end there. The border with Germany was established by the Treaty of Versailles, but the regions in the south of East Prussia (Mazury) and in Upper Silesia remained undelimited, in which it was planned to hold plebiscites. The plebiscite held on July 18, 1920 in Mazury showed that the Polish population was in no hurry to unite with the belligerent state, and this territory remained part of Germany. The situation in Upper Silesia was rather tense, and in January 1920 international troops from England, France and Italy were sent there to maintain order. Nevertheless, in August 1920, the Poles, who made up the majority of the population in rural areas, rose in revolt and created a Polish administration. However, at the insistence of the Entente, the uprising was curtailed, and as a compromise, a police force was created on an equal basis from Germans and Poles. In the end, on March 20, 1921, a plebiscite took place in Upper Silesia, during which the population of the territory east of the Oder River spoke in favor of joining Poland. Despite this result of the vote, England and Italy, seeking to weaken the French ally, insisted on transferring only half of this territory to Poland. This decision led to the fact that on May 2, 1921, the Poles began

strikes at the enterprises of Upper Silesia, and the next day an uprising broke out again. Officially, Poland did not intervene in the events, but privately, quite a few Polish military personnel participated in them. Naturally, the Entente countries demanded an end to the unrest, and although the rebels occupied almost the entire territory, the population of which spoke in favor of unification with Poland, except for large cities, they had to stop the offensive. In mid-June, a truce was reached between the Germans and the Poles, and at the end of the month, the withdrawal of Polish and German armed detachments began from Upper Silesia under pressure from the Entente. On October 20, 1921, the Conference of Ambassadors of the Entente decided to transfer to Poland <sup>296</sup> i / z of the territory of Upper Silesia, but the enterprises located on it remained with their owners (mainly Germans), and a five-year duty-free import to Germany was established for the goods of these enterprises. For its part, Poland undertook to create a special Sejm on the territory transferred to it - a body of local self-government. Only on June 22, 1922, Polish troops were introduced there. The question of

belonging to the Cieszyn (Teszyn) principality, which was claimed by Czechoslovakia and Poland, was also tensely resolved. In January-February 1919, clashes between Czechoslovak and Polish troops took place there, which ceased only after the intervention of the Entente. As a result, on July 28, 1920, the Conference of Ambassadors, taking into account the difficult situation of Poland, determined the border with the maximum consideration of Czechoslovak requirements. Most of the Teszyn Silesia, together with the city of Teszyn, was transferred to Czechoslovakia, which also received part of the Polish population<sup>297</sup>.

On September 30, 1920, Polish-Lithuanian negotiations began, as a result of which an agreement was signed on October 7 on a demarcation line that left Vilnius to Lithuania. This concession was explained by Warsaw's fears of the League of Nations, which responded to Lithuania's complaint about the actions of Polish troops on its territory. In order to still get Vilnius, the Polish leadership staged a "mutiny" in the army, and on October 9, the "rebellious" division of General Zheligovsky captured the city. Officially, Warsaw did not renounce the previously signed agreement, however, in January 1922, elections to the Vilna Sejm, boycotted by Belarusians, Lithuanians and Jews, were held in the occupied region, which proclaimed the Vilna region "an integral part of Poland." Naturally, the Polish Sejm approved this resolution, formally incorporating Vilna into Poland<sup>298</sup>.

### Implementation of the Riga

**Treaty** In Soviet-Polish relations in the first half of the 1920s, the main issues were the implementation of the provisions of the Riga Treaty and consolidation in the international arena. At the same time, the position of Poland and the Soviet republics was different. Poland was a generally recognized state that was in alliance with France, although it had various border problems. Whereas the Soviet republics were recognized only de facto, therefore, any diplomatic agreement was important for them, making them full participants in international relations. In addition, it was quite clear that the countries bordering on the Soviet republics would rather follow the path of their full recognition. It is quite understandable that relations with Poland - the largest western neighbor - were

are especially important. The Polish leadership was well aware of the benefits of its position and tried to use them for some revision of the Riga Treaty. Therefore, Warsaw tried not to rush into implementing the provisions of the treaty, since, among other things, it had to take into account the opinion of the Entente countries regarding contacts with Moscow.

All this led to the fact that even the solution of the simplest question of establishing diplomatic relations between Poland and the Soviet republics (Article 24 of the treaty) required considerable time. First of all, Warsaw proposed limiting itself to the mutual appointment of chargé d'affaires or maintaining diplomatic relations through diplomats accredited in Latvia. It is clear that Moscow was not satisfied with such a solution to a clearly stipulated issue in the treaty. On May 19 and 25, the RSFSR turned to Poland with a proposal to implement Article 24 of the Riga Treaty and allow L.M. Karahan to arrive in Warsaw in early June as a plenipotentiary<sup>299</sup>. On June 4, Poland replied that it would receive the Soviet plenipotentiary when the Polish diplomat arrived in Moscow. The Polish press launched a campaign to discuss the positive and negative sides of the normalization of relations with the eastern neighbor. Although T. Filipovich was appointed Polish ambassador to Moscow on July 1, he arrived at his duty station only on August 4, the day before he arrived in Warsaw.

Karakhan<sup>300</sup>. Diplomatic relations with the Ukrainian SSR were established only on October 6, when Polish diplomats arrived in Kharkov, and Ukrainian diplomats arrived

in Warsaw. An important issue in bilateral relations was the problem of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilians. To solve it, two mixed Soviet-Polish commissions were created, and already in March 1921, the repatriation of prisoners of war began. True, both sides had certain claims against each other: the Soviet side demanded that the regime in the Polish camps for Soviet prisoners of war be softened, and the Polish side was unhappy that the returning Polish prisoners of war, like repatriates, were largely carriers of Bolshevik ideas. As a result, the Polish side, seeking to slow down the repatriation in order to have time to filter the returnees, refused to expand the network of checkpoints on the border, and the repatriation was delayed until the autumn of 1923.<sup>301</sup>

The demarcation of the border caused a lot of problems for the parties. On May 2, 1921, a mixed border commission began its work in Minsk, but until the end of July, the Polish side actually sabotaged its work. When the parties moved to a specific demarcation, Poland demanded to move the border to the east in some places by 1-2, or even 30 km. As a result, only in November 1922 the border was drawn

on the ground and transferred to the administrative and border authorities parties, and the work of the border commission was completed only in August 1924.<sup>302</sup>

But the most painful issue for both states was the implementation of Article 5 of the Riga Treaty, which provided for the parties to refuse to support organizations hostile to each other on their territory. In the autumn of 1920, about 35,000 servicemen from the detachments of S. Bulak Balakhovich, B. Permikin, B. Savinkov, and S. Petliura were interned in Poland. However, military structures were preserved in the internment camps and military exercises were conducted, that is, it was not so much about internees as about temporarily disarmed military detachments. If we take into account that their officers were not disarmed, but the weapons were stored near the camps, then the concern of the Soviet side is quite understandable. In addition, the political organizations of the UNR and the White Guards operated quite legally in Poland, and Soviet protests only led to the fact that some organizations were closed, and others arose in their place. The Soviet side paid great attention to the termination of the activities of the Petliura government, the center of which was Tarnoye. Petliura's troops, under the leadership of Y. Tyutyunnik, in cooperation with Polish intelligence, brought spies and bandit formations into the territory of the Ukrainian SSR<sup>303</sup>. In the spring of 1921, the Polish General Staff helped Tyutyunnik prepare a plan of operation with

the aim of capturing Kamenetz-Podolsk and the subsequent offensive to the north of Right-Bank Ukraine, and from the territory of Romania, General Gulyai-Gulenko was supposed to attack Odessa, arrested several couriers and Petliura groups in the border area, and the operation was<sup>304</sup>. However, the Soviet Chekists postponed. On April 11 and 16, 1921, the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR protested against the preservation of all these anti-Soviet organizations in Poland<sup>305</sup>. Naturally, Warsaw on April 19 and 29 denied its support. On July 4, Moscow demanded that Warsaw expel the most famous figures of the white emigration from Poland<sup>306</sup>. It is clear that Poland expressed counterclaims, and Moscow suspended the work of the mixed special commission until the main Russian White Guards were expelled from Poland and their activities were terminated.



On May 7, in his telegram No. 40079/22511, the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, M.V. Frunze, pointing out to the RVS KVO that there was intelligence on the preparation of an armed uprising by Petliura's units from the territory of Poland, scheduled "about June", ordered "to develop an operation plan" for this event<sup>307</sup>. Accordingly, on May 20, the headquarters of the KVO prepared a report "The project for the regrouping of units of the KVO in the event of an offensive by Petliura units", on the basis of which, on June 4, the acting commander of the troops of the KVO N.N. Petin issued order No. 97855/op/177/sec. Noting the threat of activation of the Petliura detachments, most likely in the Pros-Kurovsky and Mogilev-Podolsky districts, he pointed out that "taking into account the signing of a peace treaty with Poland, it is hardly possible to expect a direct active and obvious offensive from Petliura from abroad. Most likely, its individual groups and organizers will make an attempt to infiltrate past the posts of the border division [izia], unite the gangs existing on the territory of the district, pour into them a new living trained force ... remove the posts of the border division from the rear from the state border and even then offensive from the territory of Poland and Romania by larger organized forces.

The troops of the KVO received the task of allocating units to defeat the bands in Podolia and Volhynia, "with a bold decisive blow from the maneuver groups of the 1st Cavalry Corps, the 44th and 24th [rifle] divisions, to seize the initiative of action in their own hands and defeat the Petliura units in the moment of their appearance on the territory of the district, trying to cut them off from the state border. The border division was required to maintain a network of its posts on the border, preventing any infiltration through it. If the division was knocked down from the border, it was necessary to retreat to the areas of Zhytomyr, Berdichev, Zhmerinka and Vapnyarka to concentrate. The main forces of the 44th Infantry Division were to concentrate in the area of Starokon-tantinov, Polonnoye, Lyubar, the 1st Cavalry Corps - in the area of Litin, Derazhnya, Bar, the 24th Infantry Division - in the area of Zhmerinka, the 45th Infantry Division - in the area of Bratslav, Vapnyarka, Olgopol, and the 25th Infantry Division - in the area of Uman, Khristinovka. The corps commander and divisional commanders were required to submit their views on the actions of the troops by June 10308.

In the summer of 1921, Soviet troops fought against the Petlyura detachments, which were crossing the territory of the Ukrainian SSR from Poland, and against various local bandit formations. The Soviet authorities waged a tense struggle with the organization of B. Savinkov, who, with the support of Polish intelligence, was engaged in the creation of terrorist-sabotage groups. Skirmishes constantly took place on the border, and in early July 1921 several armed detachments crossed the border, and conspiratorial groups raised an uprising in Belarus. For its part, Poland reproached the Soviet authorities for supporting the insurgent detachments operating in Western Belarus<sup>309</sup>. Of course, Moscow rejected these accusations, especially since they were not supported by any documentary data. However, as is now known, the Soviet special services carried out operations on the so-called "active intelligence", on the one hand, trying to eliminate the White Guard gangs, and on the other, to support the national liberation movement of the Belarusian and Ukrainian population in Poland. Only in February 1925 were these operations curtailed<sup>310</sup>. The high intensity of the fighting in the summer of 1921 gave the Soviet command the impression that the enemy

was preparing some kind of major action, and intelligence reported on the transfer of Petliura's units from Poland to Bessarabia. August Petin submitted report No. 38820/ŷŷ **"Operational considerations in the event of an offensive against Poland and Romania"** to the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea. This document stated that **"in the event that Poland and Romania allow the armed forces of Petlyura's counterrevolutionary organizations to Savinkov and Wrangel, the Federation of Soviet Republics, of course, will face the question of not only eliminating this adventure, but also opening hostilities against the Poles and Romanians.**

***In this case, I think that the initial object of our actions should be the Polish army, firstly, as a stronger one and, secondly, as operating in the Kovel-Kiev or Lvov-Kiev operational direction, which is more dangerous for us.*** The defeat of the Romanian army cannot be a priority task, since our maneuver group will be under the threat of a flank attack and can be pressed against the Black Sea. Based on the military-geographical features of the theater of operations, the political situation in Galicia, the deployment of the armies of Poland and Romania and the construction of the Dubno-Rovno fortified region, "I consider it **most advantageous for us, when operating against the Poles, to choose the main operational direction in the Starokonstantinov, Volochisk, Brody zone, Proskurov, Tarnopol, Lvov.** This will allow the fortified area to reach the rear and, hiding behind the Dniester, be near the junction of the Polish-Romanian border. **"A strike in the indicated direction must be preceded by an offensive**

***parts of the Kharkov district in the general direction to Chisinau, Iasi, in order to divert the main forces of the Romanian army. At the same time, a separate detachment must be advanced to occupy Bukovina, which will immediately expand***

***the gap at the junction of Romania with Poland. The further plan of the operation, after we occupy the Dubno-Rovno region, will depend on the result of the hostilities on the Western Front against the Poles and in the Kharkov district against the Romanians.*** The KVO will deploy 2 armies, of which one (25th, 44th rifle divisions, one rifle and one cavalry division arriving from the internal districts) should advance on the front of Sarny, Kremenets, and the other (7th, 15th, 24th, 45th rifle divisions, 1st and 3rd cavalry corps) in the form of a strike maneuver group - along the Dniester. The 3rd Army was detached from the KhVO as part of the 3rd, 30th, 51st and 52nd Infantry Divisions and the Krasnogusar Cavalry Brigade. It was necessary to create the necessary reserve (3 rifle divisions), and place the front headquarters in Kyiv or Cherkassy. It will take 10-12 days to concentrate the troops. If neutrality is violated only by Romania, then, taking into account the Soviet-Polish treaty and the internal situation in Poland, she may refuse to come to the aid of Romania. In this case, the troops of the KVO will create barriers against Poland in the areas of Zhitomir, Chudnov, Berdichev (44th rifle division and cavalry brigade) and Jletichev, Novaya Ushitsa, Zhmerinka (7th, 25th rifle divisions) and inflict "lightning, crushing blow of the Romanian army"<sup>312</sup>. At the same time, the

Soviet leadership made diplomatic efforts, seeking to normalize the situation on the western border. In its relations with the Soviet republics, Poland relied on the support of France and, to a lesser extent, England, which did not recognize them de jure, counting on the early overthrow of Soviet power. Accordingly, the Entente countries supported and financed various anti-Bolshevik organizations and formations located in the countries of Eastern Europe. For its part, Poland was interested in a long-term weakening of its eastern neighbors and therefore also provided some support to the White Guard organizations, but at the same time, the overthrow of the Bolsheviks was not very interested in the Polish leadership, since if the "whites" came to power, it would most likely have been about re-creation of a "united and indivisible Russia". Thus, the Polish eastern border would be called into question, and the Entente would receive a more important ally in Eastern Europe than Poland. As long as the Soviet republics existed, the Entente had no alternative to an alliance with Poland. Therefore, although not all of Warsaw's foreign policy actions were approved by the West, he had to put up with them. So, Poland received Eastern Galicia and Vilensk region. True, England and France condemned the Polish capture of Vilna, but at the same time they postponed the legal recognition of Lithuania until the Polish-Lithuanian conflict was solved.

It is clear that, feeling such a significant support, Poland could show significant foreign policy activity in Eastern Europe, striving to acquire the status of a great power. Under these conditions, the Polish leadership was in no hurry to implement the provisions of the Riga Treaty, especially since in the summer of 1921 a famine began in Soviet Russia and there was hope that the Bolsheviks would fall. At this point, the Entente decided to push things forward. On September 3, 1921, France offered Poland to send an ultimatum to the RSFSR, in case of rejection of which it was necessary to start a war. For its part, Paris also promised to send an ultimatum to Moscow and persuade Romania to do so. However, Soviet diplomacy, having learned about these intentions, made them public<sup>313</sup>. Naturally, Poland and France stated that there were no proposals. True, this did not prevent Poland from asking Germany what concessions on the Upper Silesian issue would allow Warsaw to count on the neutrality of Berlin in the event of a new Soviet-Polish war. On September 5, Poland closed the eastern border, pulling additional gendarmerie forces there. For its part, Moscow on September 9 again demanded that Warsaw stop

helping the White Guards<sup>315</sup>. On September 14, Poland sent a verbal note to the RSFSR indicating that the Riga Treaty had not been implemented. Moscow was required to release and deliver to the border all Polish hostages and prisoners before October 1; transfer to Poland the gold and jewels due to her under the agreement; immediately begin the work of the reevacuation and special mixed commissions. Otherwise, Warsaw threatened to break off diplomatic relations. On September 17, Moscow announced that we would agree to make the first installment of gold by October 1 and start the work of the re-evacuation commission if Poland removed the most famous leaders of the White Guards from its territory by the same time and punished those responsible for their support. The next day, a Polish note was handed over to the Soviet side, confirming the above requirements and notifying Poland of its readiness to report on the measures taken against the crossing of the border by undesirable elements.

were under the demonstrative supervision of the Polish police, and the situation on the Soviet-Polish border escalated.

It is clear that in Moscow they feared the outbreak of war, therefore, the RVSR, by its protocol No. 145 of September 21, 1921, decided that “ ***in view of the situation created in connection with the Polish ultimatum and in view of the need to keep the army at the ready, which is completely incompatible with demobilization, reorganization and the resulting demobilization moods***”, it is necessary ***to "suspend all resolutions and orders on dismissal on indefinite leave, disbandment of units and institutions until the current situation is clarified."*** The STO must adopt a resolution on providing troops, primarily border troops, with food rations. It was proposed to strengthen the Revolutionary Military Council and the political directorates of the Petrograd, Western, Kiev and Kharkov military districts with experienced personnel, the Political Directorate of the Red Army needs to develop a plan for the mobilization of communists on the Western Front and take measures to strengthen agitation in the border districts and to correctly announce all changes in Russia's relations with Poland and Romania. Prepare the draft of 1900 and 1901. birth and subsequent ages. ***“Immediately begin to separate the headquarters of the***

***Cavalry Army from the headquarters of the North Caucasus Military District. Develop a transfer plan and proceed with the transfer of the Cavalry Army.*** Measures were envisaged for the preparation of stocks of weapons and food, the deployment of military production and evacuation in the districts. On September 22, by telegram via direct wire, the STO notified all district commanders of the suspension of demobilization, reorganization and

disbandment of troops<sup>317</sup>. On September 1, 1921,

there were 1,587,875 people in the Red Army (including 732,823 fighters), 17,185 machine guns and 3,028 guns<sup>318</sup>. On September 23, the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, by his directive No. 43401 / ss, set tasks for the troops of the KVO and KhVO in case of a war. The White Guard formations of Petlyura, Bulak-Balakhovich and Wrangel, Poland and Romania appeared as potential opponents. It was pointed out that, most likely, Romania would not act alone, and the rest of the western neighbors would either be in alliance with Poland or be neutral. It was believed that the whites were weakened by internal squabbles and would not be able to field more than 50 thousand fighters. Poland could deploy 38-59 divisions, of which the main forces would be deployed north of Polissya. If Romania participates in the war, this northern Polish grouping will be further strengthened. Romania can put up to 27 divisions and, together with Poland, strike at Kyiv, Yekaterinoslav.

The tasks of the Soviet troops

were: ***“1. Repel the invasion and inflict a decisive defeat on the White Guard formations, produced in Poland and Romania.***

***2. Inflict a decisive defeat on the armies of Poland and Romania if they declare war on us.*** The directive set out several options for action. **Option "3"** was designed for a war only with Poland. In this case, the Red Army “delivers the main blow north of Polesie in the general direction to the Osovets-Bialystok-Brest line with a simultaneous offensive south of Polesie to Brest-Litovsk. At the same time, sufficient forces must be left to secure the flanks of our Polish Front. The troops of the Southwestern Front, deployed south of Polissya, strike at the Brest-Lvov front. The 7th, 24th, 25th, 44th, 45th, 15th, 3rd, 30th, 51st rifle divisions, 138th separate rifle brigade, 1 th cavalry corps (8th, 4th cavalry divisions), 3rd cavalry corps (7th, 9th cavalry divisions), a separate Krasnogusar cavalry brigade, and 4 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions will be transferred from the internal districts (total: sd - 13 i / s, cd - 61/3). The front was planned to have three armies (two against Poland and one on the Dniester). The 1st army included the 24th, 44th, 45th

rifle divisions and the 1st cavalry corps, the 2nd army - the 7th, 15th, 25th rifle divisions and the 3rd cavalry corps, 3rd Army - 51st, 3rd, 30th rifle divisions, 138th rifle and Krasnogusar cavalry brigades (with the 30th division being a front reserve). According to the situation, the arriving divisions are used either to reinforce the active armies, or are combined into the 4th Army, the command of which comes from the North Caucasian Military District. The headquarters of the armies were planned to be deployed: 1st - Kyiv, 2nd - Smela, 3rd - Yekaterinoslav. Task 1

And

The 2nd Army was ***“to promote the decisive offensive of the Western Front, for which purpose, with a blow in the north-western direction, to capture the Rovno-Tarnopol region.”*** The 3rd Army was entrusted with securing the border with Romania and guarding the

Black Sea coast. The **“PR”** option was designed for the situation of war simultaneously with Poland and Romania. In this case, ***“the main task is to inflict a decisive defeat on the Polish army, as the most***

**strong; against Romania, the same expectant actions, as remote from the main objects of the war.**

**Tasks are assigned to the fronts:**

**1. On the Western Front - inflicting a quick and decisive defeat on the Polish army, offensive in the general direction to the Osovets-Bialystok-Brest-Litovsk front. 2.**

**On the Southwestern Front -**

**a) covering the**

**borders, b) ensuring the mobilization and concentration of**

**the armies of the front, c) ensuring the left flank of the advancing**

**armies of the Western Front, d) active defensive operations against Romania covering the directions to Kiev, Cherkassy, Kremenchug and**

**Yekaterinoslav , e) defense of the Black Sea coast from the Dniester estuary to the Kerch Strait inclusive".**

The 7th, 24th, 25th, 44th, 45th, 15th, 3rd, 30th, 51st rifle divisions, the 138th separate rifle division are allocated to the Southwestern Front. brigade, 1st cavalry corps (4th, 8th cavalry divisions), 3rd cavalry corps (7th, 9th cavalry divisions) and a separate Krasnogusar cavalry brigade. In addition, 6 rifle and 4 cavalry divisions should arrive from the internal districts (total: sd - 15 i / s, cd - 8 i / z). The concentration of the armies of the front was envisaged on the line of the river. Teterev, Zhytomyr, Vinnitsa, r. Southern Bug. The troops of the front were required to "conduct active defensive operations against Romania, which should result in a strike in the direction of Iasi and our capture of Bessarabia", as well as "to secure the left flank of the Western Front and, decisively advancing against Poland, to capture the Rovno-Lviv region." The number and composition of the armies remained unchanged. In the event of an

invasion of only the White Guard formations, the 7th, 24th, 45th, 44th, 25th rifle divisions, the 1st cavalry corps (4th, 8th cavalry divisions) and 3rd cavalry corps (7th, 9th cavalry divisions) (total: sd - 5, cd - 4). The command of the districts was required to submit their views on all issues by October 5 1919. Accordingly, the Soviet troops were brought to a state of high alert, division headquarters received deployment schemes and began preparations for the evacuation of valuable property from the border strip.

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In an effort to avoid an increase in confrontation, the RSFSR on September 22 proposed to Poland a specific program of measures to normalize relations on the basis of mutual implementation of the provisions of the Riga Treaty. Moscow has indicated that many of the Polish demands have already been met, and the rest will be met on a reciprocal basis. The Soviet side again insisted on the removal from Poland of those involved in raids on Soviet territory, the arrest and conviction of those who participated in these incidents, the transfer of internment camps away from the Soviet border, the dismissal of Cossack emigrants from the Polish border guard and proposed a joint investigation facts of support for Savinkovites and Petliurists by the Polish military. It was proposed to move the deadline for the implementation of these measures to 5 October 1919. The publication of this response in the press led Romania to refuse from the intention to present their claims.

At the same time, on September 15, England accused the RSFSR of violating the agreement of March 16, 1921, but after receiving the Soviet answer on September 27, it admitted that all the accusations were based on unreliable sources. Finland and Estonia also made claims against the RSFSR. It is clear that Moscow feared the outbreak of war, but the internal problems of its Western neighbors and the firm, albeit constructive, position of Soviet diplomacy made it possible to find a compromise. As early as September 26, Poland declared its readiness to discuss Soviet proposals<sup>323</sup>. As a result of the negotiations on October 7, the Soviet-Polish Protocol was signed.

on the settlement of mutual claims. It was decided that no later than October 8, B. Savinkov, D. Odinet, D. Yaroslavl'tsev, A. Dyckoff-Derenthal and A. Rudin would leave Poland, and no later than October 20 - A. Myagkov, Yu. Tyutyunnik, M. Pavlenko-Omelyanovich, A. Zelinsky and S. Bulak-Balakhovich. On October 8, the re-evacuation and special commissions were to begin their work, and the RSFSR would begin the re-evacuation of property and cultural property to Poland and, by October 20, would transfer the first installment for railway property. For its part, Poland will inform the Soviet side of the text of the order for the army regarding the implementation of Article 5 of the Riga Treaty, and the work detachments of the internees will be transferred from the border regions to the interior of the country<sup>324</sup>.

Already on October 10, the RSFSR handed over to Poland the first installment of gold and jewelry, but Warsaw was in no hurry with the expulsion of the White Guards, and only after double reminders and the suspension of the work of the commissions on October 30, the above persons left Poland<sup>325</sup>. On November 1, Poland received a

railway rolling stock, and on November 15, the re-evacuation commission decided to begin the transfer of archives evacuated in 1915 to Poland. Nevertheless, there was no shortage of people who wanted to fight. At the end of September 1921, Finnish irregulars invaded Soviet Karelia, hoping to capture it and annex it to Finland. Fighting in Karelia continued until the beginning of March

1922. Naturally, Poland offered its help to Finland, but, since in Karelia formally non-state detachments acted, this proposal was rejected in Helsinki.

In the meantime, on October 17, S. Petliura ordered the Second Winter Campaign to begin with the goal of occupying Kyiv by the end of December and raising an uprising in Ukraine. On the night of October 29, 1921, an almost 2,000-strong detachment of Petliurists under the command of Palia crossed the Gusyatin river. Zbruch and invaded the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. On the same day, Moscow made a presentation to Poland, and on October 31 demanded that assistance to the militants be stopped. By November 19-20, the Red Army drove the Petliura detachment back to Polish territory, and in Poland they were again interned. On the night of November 4, the Volyn group of 400-600 Petliurists with 3 machine guns invaded Soviet territory in the Korosten direction<sup>326</sup>. Under these conditions, on November 19, a resolution of the Council of Labor and Defense (STO) of the RSFSR was adopted, according to which the border troops of the Cheka were replaced at the border by field troops of the Red Army<sup>327</sup>.

Only almost a year later, "September 27, 1922, with the new resolution of the STO, border protection was transferred to the jurisdiction of the GPU, within the framework of which a separate border corps was created<sup>328</sup>.

On November 24, 1921, the temporary acting commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea K.A. Avksentievskiy, by his directive No. 45139/ss, in order to clarify directive No. 43401/ss, ordered the strategic deployment of the armies of the South-Western Front "to be carried to the line of the river. Black grouse - Zhytomyr - Vinnytsia - r. Southern Bug, moreover, production and cover for mobilization and concentration

lay in pieces

1st and 3rd cavalry corps. The 1st cavalry corps was to be deployed in the area of Starokonstantin-nov-Shepetovka-Novograd-Volynsk-Chartori, and the 3rd cavalry corps - Zhmerinka-Bar-Letichiv-Khmelnik-Lukashivka. The main forces of the 44th and 24th rifle divisions, which were guarding the state border, were ordered to withdraw to the Zhytomyr-Malin-Radomysl and Vinnitsa-Kalinovka-Pogrebishche region, where they should concentrate by the 12th day of mobilization.

The 1st Army included the 44th, 45th, 7th Rifle Divisions, the 1st Cavalry Corps (1st, 2nd Cavalry Divisions). At the same time, the 45th division was concentrated in the Berdichev-Fastov-Kazatin area, and the 7th division - in the Kiev UR. The 2nd Army united the 15th, 24th, 25th Rifle Divisions and the 3rd Cavalry Corps (7th, 9th Cavalry Divisions). At the same time, the 25th division concentrated in the Tarashcha-Korsun-Zhashkov region, and the 15th division - Uman-Monastyrishche-Gaisin. The concentration of rifle troops was to be completed on the 17th-18th day of mobilization. The directive required the preparation of detailed plans by December 10, 1921.<sup>329</sup> In accordance with this directive, in December 1921-January 1922, the headquarters of the KVO and KhVO developed operational plans for the deployment of troops in the event of a war with Poland and Romania, as well as the engineering preparation of the future theater military action<sup>330</sup>. December 28,

1921 IX All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the initiative of V.I. Lenin adopted the "Declaration on the International Status of the RSFSR", which noted that, despite the desire to establish good-neighborly relations with Romania, Poland and Finland, making all kinds of concessions and even heavy sacrifices, the military and chauvinist parties of these states did not minute they do not cease in one form or another to prepare or carry out attacks on Soviet Russia", which in no way "encroaches on the independence and sovereign rights of other states". Under these conditions, the congress warned "the governments of neighboring states that if they continue to encroach or support encroachments on the integrity of Soviet territory and on the security of the Soviet republics", they will force them to an adequate "response, which could be fatal for the attacker and his accomplices"<sup>331</sup>. It is clear that the command of the Red Army continued to develop plans in case

war.

By his directive No. 58198 / A / ss of February 4, 1922, the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, Frunze, demanded that the headquarters of the KVO and KhVO develop plans in case of war with Poland and Romania, supporting the White Guard formations. On February 23, the headquarters of the KVO presented a plan for the operational deployment of troops in case of mobilization. The formations of Petlyura (17 thousand people), Savinkov (9,060 people), Wrangel (30 thousand fighters), as well as Poland and Romania were called probable opponents. The plan provides for two possible scenarios. In the first case, the performance of the White Guard formations and Poland was considered possible. In this case, the enemy can put up 264-393 thousand bayonets, 41,245 sabers, 1,608-2,335 light and 456-608

heavy guns. Another option provided for the addition of Romania to the above opponents. In this case, the enemy forces were estimated at 360-585.8 thousand bayonets, 59 thousand sabers, 2285-3487 light and 456-608 heavy guns. It took 11-14 days to mobilize the Red Army.

The main blow was to be directed against Poland, which would require breaking through, probably, three defensive lines: along pp. Goryn, Styr and Western Bug. There were defensive lines on Soviet territory. Ubor, Mezherichi-Novograd-Vo-lynsk, r. Sluch, Ostropol-Letichiv, r. Lyadov. The most probable was the invasion of only the White Guard formations and the activation of gangs in the rear of the Red Army, and only then, when our border guards were neutralized, a breakthrough from abroad would follow. Therefore, the troops guarding the border were tasked with "firmly standing at their posts, intensively watching the state border, preventing infiltration through it."

The plan provided for two options for the deployment of the **KVO troops .. Option "3"**, designed for a war only with Poland, provided for the creation of a department of the South-Western Front on the basis of the headquarters of the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea as part of 3 armies. The 9th Army was separated from the headquarters of the KVO, the 8th Army from the headquarters of the commander of all the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, and the 10th from the headquarters of the KhVO. The task of the troops of the front was: "a) covering the borders; b) ensuring the mobilization and concentration of the armies of the front; c) assistance to the decisive offensive of the Western Front by an offensive in the general direction of Brest-Litovsk, Lvov. The 9th Army included the 7th, 25th, 44th, 45th and secondary 41st rifle divisions, the 1st cavalry corps, a separate Krasnogusar cavalry brigade and the arriving 2nd cavalry division. The 8th Army united the 24th, 15th, 30th Rifle Divisions, the 9th Cavalry Division, the Kotovsky Cavalry Brigade and the arriving 15th Siberian Cavalry Division.

**"Fulfillment of the main task of the front - assistance to the offensive of the Western Front, is entrusted to the 9th and 8th armies, while the latter should only assist the 9th army in its offensive. The 10th Army was entrusted with the passive task of guarding the Romanian border and the Black Sea coast.**

**Specific tasks for the armies:**

**9th Army - to assist the decisive offensive of the Western Front, for which a blow to in the north-western direction to seize the region of Rovno, Kovel.**

**8th Army - to secure the left flank of the main strike group with an offensive in the direction of Tarnopol, Lvov. 10th Army - to**

**secure the border with Romania and guard the Black Sea coast. The concentration of the armies of the front is to be carried out to the east of the line of the river. Teterev, Zhytomyr, Vinnitsa, r. Southern**

**Bug. Concentration and mobilization should be carried out under the cover of cavalry units, which should conduct extensive reconnaissance and by their actions disrupt the mobilization and concentration of the Polish army, destroy railways and military installations behind enemy lines, and help organize an uprising. In the event of an attack from Poland, the 44th Rifle**

Division, the Krasnogusar Cavalry Brigade and the 1st Cavalry Corps are detached from the 9th Army to cover the mobilization of Soviet troops. The task of the 44th Rifle Division, deployed on the border, is to organize raids to disrupt the Polish mobilization and delay the concentration and deployment of enemy troops and their advance to the east. Armored trains and parts of the CHON should be used for sabotage and uprisings behind enemy lines. A separate Krasnogusar cavalry brigade should conduct reconnaissance at Sarny, Rovno and Ostrog. The 1st cavalry corps is in a state of readiness for a raid on Tarnopol, Brody, Dubno to undermine the Polish rear with a return to the Shepetovka, Starokonstantinov area. It was planned to concentrate army troops in the following areas: 44th division - Snovidovich, Belozerk; otd. Krasnogusar cavalry brigade - Emilchi-no,

Novograd-Volynsk; 2nd Cavalry Division - Ovruch, Volchkovo; 45th division - Khodorkov, Zhitomir, Berdichev; 7th division - Kuhari, Radomysl, Borodianka; 25th division - Brusilov, Zhidovtsy, Fastov; 41st division - Gostomel, Byshev, Vasilkov.

From the troops of the 8th Army, the 24th Rifle Division, the 9th and 15th Siberian Cavalry Divisions and the Kotovsky Cavalry Brigade stood out to cover the mobilization. The 24th division was deployed on the border in the strip from Belozerk to the mouth of the river. Zbruch with the task of organizing raids and sabotage on enemy territory. The 9th Cavalry Division and the Kotovsky Cavalry Brigade are concentrated in the Krasilov, Proskurov area with the task of conducting reconnaissance on Tarnopol, and the 15th Siberian Cavalry Division - in the Yarmolintsy, Dunaevtsy area to conduct reconnaissance on Monastyrzhiska. The remaining troops of the army were concentrated: the 15th division in the Lukashevka, Dashev, Tronov, Khristinov-ka area; 30th division - Tarashcha, Stavische, Zhashkov, Boyarka. The 22nd Infantry Division remained in the reserve of the South-Western Front in the Cherkasy area, Smela.

According to the **"PR" option**, which envisaged a war simultaneously with Poland and Romania, the grouping and tasks of the troops of the Southwestern Front were completely preserved. "Concentration and mobilization should be carried out under the cover of cavalry units, which should conduct extensive reconnaissance and by their actions disrupt the mobilization and concentration of the Polish and Romanian armies, destroy railways and military installations behind enemy lines, and help organize an uprising." The grouping and tasks of the troops of the 9th and 8th armies remained the same as in the first version of the plan. Only the 15th Siberian Cavalry Division was to concentrate in the area of Bratslav, Rakhny, Vapnyarka with the task of conducting reconnaissance in the direction of Chernivtsi, Kolomyia, and the 22nd Rifle Division subordinate to the 8th Army was concentrated in the area of Smela, Bobrinskaya, Tsvetkovo.

The troops of the 10th Army were to concentrate: one brigade of the 51st Rifle Division at st. Borsch, the 5th Rifle Division arriving in the Olvi-opol, Chemirpol, Golovenevsk area. The 2nd and 34th rifle divisions were allocated to the reserve of the Southwestern Front, concentrating, respectively, in the area of Kyiv and Lozova. Mob readiness of troops was determined at 24 hours for cavalry, at 7 days for infantry and artillery in Right-Bank Ukraine, and at 8-14 days - in Left-Bank Ukraine and for secondary units. In the event that Soviet troops retreated from the border to the line of deployment, it was necessary to provide for the use of partisan detachments for reconnaissance and sabotage<sup>332</sup>. The deployment of field administrations according to these plans was envisaged as follows: the South-Western Front - Kharkov, the 8th Army - Smela, the 10th Army - Znamenka,

11th Army - Aleksandrovsk. If the attack is undertaken only by the White Guard formations, then the available units must repel it, and the command of the 10th Army is created only when the situation becomes more

complicated<sup>333</sup>. On March 17, 1922, the commander of the troops of the KVO I.E. Yakir issued Order No. 6/sek/96194/

op, according to which **"at present, the international situation forces us to expect energetic attempts by the enemies of Soviet Russia in the coming months to resume the fight against us both in the border areas and within the republic, especially in those areas where banditry has not yet been completely eliminated.**

The commanders of the 24th and 44th rifle divisions were ordered, while continuing to secure the border, to urgently put all units on alert. **"In the event**

**that overseas bands penetrate our territory, build the entire struggle to destroy them on the maneuver of the indicated reserves (regiments and brigades), while simultaneously using the full mobility of the divisional cavalry. Under no circumstances shall the units directly guarding the state border weaken their surveillance of the border. In the event of a breakthrough of overseas gangs, their first task is to again advance to their sites and close the state border.**

Parts of the 1st cavalry corps, 6th and 9th cavalry divisions should also be put on alert, cavalry brigades of Kotovsky and the 7th rifle division and to strengthen undercover <sup>134</sup>.

intelligence In an effort to prevent a new aggravation of the situation on the western borders, on March 18, the RVSR approved the following proposal by the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army on March 18: In Romania and Galicia, anxiety is growing in the border population and, in particular, a desire is expressed to repulse the bandits on their own and punish their organizers, that is, the Romanian and Polish authorities, the RVSR considers it necessary to draw the attention of the NKID to this in order to prevent the Romanian and the Polish authorities that the Petliura and Savinkov gangs from Romania and Poland will inevitably cause a uniform rebuff from the border population. On the part of the War Department, there can be a complete guarantee that, if our borders remain inviolable, no bands from our side will be allowed into the territory of Poland and Romania. In the case of repeated bandit raids on our territory, the local military authorities declare that it is completely impossible for them to take responsibility for protecting the inviolability of the Romanian and Polish borders, not to mention the fact that too decisive policy on our part in this regard will not be understood at all. by the local population. " However, the general situation on the western border of the Soviet republics in 1922 was much calmer than the year before. Under these conditions, the operational plans of the Red Army outlined above remained only on paper.

At that time, the main foreign policy goal of Poland was to create a military-political bloc in Eastern Europe under its leadership. The Polish leadership believed that the creation of such an alliance would allow, on the one hand, to influence the Soviet republics, and on the other hand, to influence England and France and achieve the status of a great power for Poland. A certain impetus to these intentions was given by the decision of the Entente on January 6, 1922 to convene an international conference in Genoa

to address the economic revival of Europe. Although the RSFSR was invited to the conference, this did not at all mean its legal recognition. Thus, the treaties concluded by it were not recognized. Under these conditions, Poland found itself in a situation where the international community did not recognize its eastern borders and part of the debts of the Russian Empire could be assigned to it. Therefore, Warsaw decided to put pressure on the RSFSR and reach an agreement with Estonia, Latvia and Finland, which found themselves in a similar situation.

On December 4, 1921, having received a Polish proposal to start trade negotiations, Moscow agreed on December 14<sup>336</sup>. The negotiations in Warsaw, which began on March 10, showed that Poland is using trade negotiations to achieve political goals. Warsaw demanded that the RSFSR refuse to support Lithuania, stop anti-Versailles propaganda and did not want to expand transit to Germany and Austria. It is clear that the negotiations were interrupted, and Warsaw's attempts to play on the contradictions between Moscow and Kiev failed<sup>337</sup>. On March 13, a conference of Estonia, Latvia and Poland opened in Warsaw, striving to agree on their position on the eve of the Genoa Conference. On March 17, the Warsaw Pact was signed, according to which its participants confirmed their agreements with the RSFSR, promised not to conclude agreements directed against each other, to resolve disputes peacefully and maintain benevolent neutrality and consult in the event of an "unprovoked attack" from the East. An agreement was also reached on the coordination of diplomatic actions in Moscow, thus Poland received a certain opportunity to influence the foreign policy of the Baltic countries<sup>338</sup>. The Warsaw Pact could become the basis of the Baltic Union, but Finland did not ratify it. To keep up appearances, the participants of the conference at the end of its work invited the Soviet

representative to take part in it, but Moscow prudently refused, not wanting to give the impression that the decisions taken were agreed with it<sup>339</sup>. On March 16, the RSFSR invited the participants of the conference in Warsaw to arrive in Moscow on March 22 to discuss common issues on the eve of the Genoa Conference, but Poland and the Baltic countries, demonstrating their independence, offered Riga as the meeting place. During the conference in Riga on March 29-30, 1922, an agreement was reached on the desirability of coordinated actions by the delegations of the RSFSR, Poland, Latvia and Estonia in Genoa and the mutual guarantee of treaties between them. The parties called for de jure recognition of the RSFSR. It was also about the desirability of improving the railway communication and transferring border guards to regular troops or border guards, which would make it possible to eliminate armed bands from the border strip<sup>340</sup>. But the negative reaction of France forced Poland on April 6 to declare that all the agreements reached were only an exchange of views, not binding<sup>341</sup>.

In Genoa, the Polish delegation took a pro-French position and, together with the countries of the Little Entente, opposed de jure recognition of the RSFSR. Following England and France, Poland condemned the Soviet-German treaty in Rapallo, and the Polish press raised a fuss about the Soviet-German military alliance and the preparation of an attack on Poland. Naturally, on April 24, Moscow reasonably pointed out to Poland that its actions violated the Treaty of Riga and the agreement, according to which it was necessary to promote de jure recognition of the RSFSR<sup>342</sup>. For its part, Poland tried in this way to achieve recognition by England and France of its eastern border and to receive reparations from Germany. However, none of these goals was achieved. Moreover, when, in a conversation with the British Minister of Finance, N. Chamberlain, the Polish representative stated that a strong Poland was in the interests of England, he heard in response that this was not so. The main thing is that Germany should have the opportunity to expand to the East, and a strong Poland will hinder this. Of course, in conditions when Germany did not represent any noticeable force in Europe, such a foreign policy construction could hardly be taken seriously in Warsaw.

On June 12, 1922, Moscow proposed to Poland and its northwestern neighbors that they convene a conference to discuss the issue of a proportional reduction of the armed forces. Naturally, this proposal did not arouse enthusiasm in Warsaw. On July 9, the Polish leadership declared its readiness to participate, but only after the completion of similar meetings in the League of Nations, which was hardly possible in the near future<sup>344</sup>. However, the widespread propaganda of the Soviet proposal and the position of Romania and the Baltic countries led to the fact that in August consultations of military experts were held in Tallinn, who proposed that Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Finland together should have the same armed forces as the RSFSR, that is, it would be about the reduction of the Soviet armed forces. In the end, after various delays, Poland agreed on August 29 to take part in the Moscow Conference on Disarmament<sup>345</sup>. On December 2, 1922, delegations from Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia arrived in Moscow. Poland also represented the interests of its ally Romania, which



refused to participate directly in the conference because of the unresolved Bessarabian issue. The Soviet delegation proposed to reduce the armed forces by 25%, but Poland insisted on moral disarmament and offered to sign a non-aggression and arbitration pact. When the text of the non-aggression pact was agreed, it turned out that Poland and the Baltic countries did not want to abandon agreements that contradicted the proposed non-aggression pact. As a result, like most such events, the Moscow Conference on Disarmament on December 12 ended without results<sup>346</sup>. In the second half of 1922, Moscow repeatedly raised the issue of a trade agreement with Warsaw, but Poland, referring to the non-

recognition of the Soviet monopoly of foreign trade, avoided negotiations. For its part, Warsaw demanded that Moscow fulfill its financial obligations under the Riga Treaty. Nevertheless, on September 19, 1922, negotiations began on a postal and telegraph convention, which was signed on May 23, 1923. In the autumn of 1922, the reevacuation and mixed commissions resumed their work. The events of 1923 in Germany led to Poland mobilizing 800,000 reservists. Thus, the Polish army could be used either to help France against Germany, or to prevent Soviet help from Germany. Warsaw repeatedly declared its readiness to support France if Paris asked her to do so. For its part, the Soviet Union invited Poland, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to remain neutral and declared that it would not tolerate their military actions against Germany<sup>347</sup>.

While the Great Powers were preoccupied with German problems, Poland tried to solve the Lithuanian question. Here, in addition to the question of Vilna, there was the question of the ownership of Memel (Klaipeda), torn from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and transferred to the control of the League of Nations. On December 22, 1922, the RSFSR demanded that its interests be taken into account when resolving this issue, but the League of Nations ignored this statement, although it was decided to take into account the interests of Poland. Without waiting for the decision of the League of Nations, on January 13-15, 1923, Lithuanian irregular detachments occupied Memel (Klaipeda), which naturally aroused sharp indignation in Warsaw. Using the decision of the Council of the League of Nations

On February 3, 1923, on the division of the neutral zone on the Polish-Lithuanian demarcation line established by the League of Nations on November 30 and December 17, 1920, Poland sent its troops there on February 13-17 and occupied the Vilnius-Grodno railway. There were clashes between Lithuanian and Polish detachments. On February 16, the Conference of Ambassadors of the Entente decided to transfer Memel (Klaipeda) to Lithuania, but with the provision of certain rights to use the port to Poland. February 17

Moscow reminded Poland that the involvement of third countries to resolve the Polish-Lithuanian conflict is contrary to the Riga Treaty, so they should agree among themselves, and the USSR offers mediation services. Of course, Poland stated that Moscow misinterprets article 3 of the treaty and interferes in other than its own affairs<sup>348</sup>. On March 15, the Conference of Ambassadors proposed to draw the Polish-Lithuanian border along the demarcation line, in fact legalizing the Polish seizure of the Vilnius region. It is clear that Lithuania protested, which did not prevent the Council of the League of Nations from approving this decision. Moscow declared non-recognition of this decision of the Vilna issue, which caused gratitude from Kaunas<sup>349</sup>.

At the same time, Poland tried to intensify rapprochement with the Baltic countries, using for this economic issues discussed at conferences in March and July 1923. However, it turned out that the Baltic states were much more interested in a real solution to the economic problems of the region, and not in anti-Soviet attacks. Moreover, Estonia even offered to invite the USSR to such conferences, which caused a sharply negative reaction from Poland, which intended to exert a decisive influence on the policy of the Baltic countries towards Moscow. It is clear that the USSR was striving in every possible way to normalize its relations with the Baltic States, which was an effective countermeasure to Polish foreign policy efforts. For its part, Poland, having received a Soviet note on July 23 notifying it of the formation of the USSR, on August 31 demanded that Moscow confirm all previously concluded agreements (although this was stated in the Soviet note), open branches of the Polish diplomatic mission in Kharkov, Tiflis and Minsk and postpone the deadline for completing the repatriation and option of Poles from the Far East and

Transcaucasia to April 30, 1924. Naturally, these demands caused a negative reaction from the Soviet side, which on September 13 indicated that the Polish demands were inappropriate, and the treaties continued to operate. As a result, December 13

1923 Poland declared that it recognized the formation of the USSR and was ready to maintain diplomatic relations with its government. In response, Moscow allowed Warsaw to open consulates general in Kharkov and Minsk.

At the same time, the Soviet side again tried to establish economic relations with Warsaw, but the Polish position remained adamant, and a new round of negotiations ended in vain. The Polish government did not take into account the fact that Polish businessmen sought to enter the Soviet market, and for political reasons took an uncompromising position. Nevertheless, on July 30, on a parity basis, the Russian-Polish Autonomous Okrug (Ros-pol) was formed, which was engaged in organizing trade between the USSR and Poland and beyond. In 1923-1925, on the Soviet-Polish border there were new incidents with gangs operating from the territory of Poland<sup>351</sup> and the USSR suspended the shipment of gold and jewelry to Poland. On June 18, Warsaw demanded the resumption of the transfer of valuables, but Moscow, in turn, offered it to compensate for the damage from the raids. The Polish side boycotted the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow, to which both Polish firms and members of the Polish government were invited. Moreover, the Polish side tried to prevent Soviet transit to Germany, where unrest continued, considering it as support for the combat capability of Berlin. In October 1923, the USSR negotiated with Poland and the Baltic countries on the issue of transit and neutrality with respect to Germany, but Warsaw did not go beyond general talk. At the same time, Poland warned England and France about the Soviet threat, but such statements were not taken seriously in the West.

In the meantime, Soviet-Polish negotiations continued on resolving the financial issues of the Riga Treaty. The Polish side made claims for 75 million rubles for the evacuated material assets in 1915, however, a significant part of the Polish claims were not properly documented. Nevertheless, the Soviet side, interested in maintaining normal relations, often made concessions, which, however, did not prevent Poland from using all these difficulties in anti-Soviet agitation. From December 1921 to June 1, 1924, equipment from 28 factories and a lot of disparate equipment evacuated from its territory during the First World War were transferred to Poland. At the same time, the mixed settlement commission considered the issue of private financial claims of Polish citizens. In the end, the Soviet side agreed to pay 11,081,120,185 Polish marks (2,195 gold rubles, or \$1,114) for these claims, but Warsaw refused, and the issue was postponed for a long time. In addition, Poland sought to receive more than 6 million gold rubles for evacuated livestock and 15 million gold rubles for evacuated non-industrial goods of individuals. Naturally, Moscow evaded paying such over-inflated sums. At the same time, there was a transfer to Poland of cultural property (archives, libraries, museums, etc.) that had been taken out of Poland since the end of the 18th century. As a result, on August 25, 1924, a Soviet-Polish agreement was signed on <sup>352</sup>, and on December 2, 1924, the USSR transferred \$ 102,913 to Poland, which meant the re- the main problems of a material evacuation and compensation of property meant the resolution of nature. The transfer of the main part of the cultural property ended with an agreement dated November 16, 1927, according to which the parties decided to continue this work without any time restrictions. The USSR owed Poland 30 million gold rubles - Moscow simply did not have this money. Since the gold reserves were replenished due to the expansion of foreign trade, the Soviet side pointed out that Poland itself, refusing to conclude a trade agreement, did not allow the payment of these funds to be accelerated. All this allowed Moscow not to hurry with the repayment of this payment<sup>353</sup>.

Of great importance in Soviet-Polish relations was the question of the fulfillment by the Polish side of the resolutions of the Riga Treaty regarding the granting of cultural rights to Belarusians and Ukrainians in the eastern regions of the country. On December 17, 1920, the Polish Sejm adopted a law on allotment of land to soldiers who distinguished themselves in the Soviet-Polish war, and by the end of 1922, about 25 thousand families received land in the eastern regions of Poland. These settlers (siegemen) were considered by the Polish leadership as a support for the future Polonization of the outskirts. Instead of closing national schools, Polish ones were opened. It is clear that the local population reacted negatively to the Polonization and gradually a national movement was formed in the eastern regions of Poland, more noticeable in Eastern Galicia. On March 15, 1923, the Entente Ambassadors' Conference recognized the de facto borders of Poland with Lithuania and the USSR, fixing Eastern Galicia and Vilenshchyna in its composition. This provoked a protest from Moscow and Kiev, who declared

that they did not recognize this decision<sup>354</sup>. On May 10, 1924, the USSR drew Poland's attention to the fact that "the persecution of national minorities had taken on a mass and systematic character" and cited specific facts of violence by the Polish authorities against the population of the eastern outskirts. Naturally, Warsaw rejected these claims, declaring them interference in the internal affairs of Poland<sup>355</sup>. On August 12, during negotiations with Engla party reiterated

on the need to grant the population of Eastern Galicia the right to self-determination<sup>356</sup>. On August 23, the Polish side declared to Moscow that there was no question of Eastern Galicia, and intensified punitive measures against the Belarusian and Ukrainian population<sup>357</sup>. Naturally, on September 5, the USSR confirmed the invariance of its position on the issue of deciding the fate of Eastern Galicia, and on September 9, it refuted the accusations of the USSR in organizing "bandit attacks on our eastern border" made in an interview with the Polish Minister of War V. Sikorsky<sup>358</sup>.

In response, the Polish side on September 16 stated that, according to the Treaty of Riga, both sides had renounced "all rights and claims to land" on both sides of the border, and therefore the Soviet side did not have the right to make comments on the issue of Eastern Galicia, which is the territory of Poland<sup>359</sup>. On September 22, Moscow pointed out that its statements did not refer to the actual belonging of the territory of Eastern Galicia, but to the form in which this issue was resolved without the participation of the USSR and without taking into account the opinion of the population of this territory itself, which was once promised by the Entente countries. As for Warsaw's reproaches of interfering in the internal affairs of Poland, it was rightly stated that the support of the Georgian government in exile by the Polish representative in the League of Nations in the context of the rebellion in Georgia is direct interference in the internal affairs of the USSR<sup>360</sup>.

#### **Moscow and Warsaw in international relations in the late 1920s. In**

1924 the situation around the USSR changed. On February 1, England recognized the USSR de jure, followed by Italy and other countries officially recognizing the USSR. On April 24, Poland signed with the USSR a convention on direct railway communication, in which the issue of tariffs was resolved. On July 18, 1924, a consular convention was signed, according to which Poland received the right to create consulates in Leningrad, Kiev, Khabarovsk and Tiflis, and the USSR in Lodz, Gdansk and Lvov, however, the ratification of the convention took place only on March 27, 1926. July 31, 1924 The border line was finally agreed upon, and in the first half of the year the repatriation and option of the Poles was basically completed, in total about 1.1 million people left for Poland. The postal and telegraph convention, signed on May 24, 1923, was ratified only in February 1925, because Poland was afraid of Bolshevik propaganda.

The economic crisis in Poland led to an increase in inflation, and in order to stabilize the currency, the Polish leadership decided to apply for a loan from France, but Paris refused the loan. Then Warsaw turned to England and announced cooperation with London and support for its policy in Eastern Europe. As a result, in February

In 1924, the Anglo-Polish trade agreement was signed, which allowed British firms to penetrate the Polish economy. But England never gave a loan to Poland. As a result of maneuvering between England and France in 1924-1926. Warsaw received 300 million francs out of a 400 million war loan. On November 2, 1924, a Franco-Polish treaty was signed to intensify intelligence work in Germany, confirm the borders of Poland and supply French weapons. France promised support in the creation of the Polish Navy, and Warsaw, for its part, was forced to make economic concessions. As a result, the negative balance in Poland's trade with France increased from 19.9 million zloty in 1924 to 72.6 million in 1925.

In January 1925, Germany offered England and France to guarantee their borders in the west, and Poland to return Pomerania, but at the same time it was granted the right to trade in the ports of the Baltic Sea and one railway to them. Under these conditions, Poland turned to England and France for support, but they ignored her requests. Convinced of the readiness of England and France to compromise in the West, Germany intensified propaganda for the idea of revising the eastern borders, and in July 1925 announced a boycott of Polish trade, which painfully hit Poland, in whose foreign trade Germany accounted for 37% of imports and 50 % of export. For Germany, Poland was not an important trading partner: it accounted for only 4.8% of German exports and 5.3% of imports. Ignoring the

complaints of Poland, England and France signed the Rhine Guarantee Pact with Germany, angering those allies of Paris in Eastern Europe whose borders were not guaranteed. Moreover, as a result of the decisions in Locarno, Poland lost the guarantee of automatic assistance from France by virtue of the Franco-Polish military alliance, directed, among other things, against Germany. Now France would be able to help Poland in the event of a conflict with Germany only after the countries guarantors of the Rhine Pact would confirm that Germany's actions violate this agreement, and this might well not have happened. On September 29, 1925, the Soviet

side offered Poland a rapprochement on an anti-German basis, but Warsaw declined this offer<sup>361</sup>. On the contrary, the Polish leadership decided to find a compromise with Germany and in Locarno concluded an arbitration agreement with it, under which, nevertheless,

questions of boundaries came up. Polish claims to permanent membership in the Council of the League of Nations also turned out to be unsatisfied, since England opposed this. Meanwhile, Berlin, continuing to play on the contradictions between West and East, signed a trade agreement with Moscow on October 12, 1925 (according to which Germany provided

a loan to the USSR), and on April 24, 1926, a non-aggression and neutrality pact. These steps by Germany led to the fact that England and France, although they condemned the Soviet-German agreements, agreed to provide Berlin with a place as a permanent member of the Council of the League of Nations, while Poland became only a non-permanent member of the Council of 362. For Moscow, the Soviet-German agreement, as well as a similar agreement with Lithuania, became a form of response to Poland's desire to blockade with the Baltic countries<sup>363</sup>.

At the height of the Ruhr crisis, England and France again stepped up their policy aimed at creating a Polish-Baltic alliance, but the contradictions between the countries of the region turned out to be too great, and Germany and the USSR skillfully counteracted these intentions. As a result, by the autumn of 1925, the position of London also changed, and the question was again postponed. Therefore, when in November-December 1925 Latvia voiced the idea of creating a "Northern Locarno" based on the unification of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, neither Moscow, nor Berlin, nor even London supported these intentions. It was undesirable for the USSR to have a single military-political bloc on its western and northwestern borders, for Germany there was a threat of the realization of its revanchist intentions, and the interests of England were contrary to the creation of a political situation that would prevent German expansion in the east. It is clear that under these conditions the idea of "Northern Locarno" quietly died in the corridors of European diplomacy. In the meantime, in December 1925, Poland offered Sweden to conclude a guarantee agreement, but Stockholm rejected this offer. On March 26, 1926, the Polish-Romanian mutual assistance treaty of 1921 was confirmed, now the parties agreed that the treaty would be directed not only against the USSR, but also against Germany and Hungary. Given the Polish desire to create a single bloc on the Soviet western borders, Moscow, in turn,

tried to improve relations with Germany and Lithuania, concluding treaties of neutrality with them on April 24 and September 28, 1926, which caused dissatisfaction in Warsaw<sup>364</sup>. On May 1-15, 1926, J. Pilsudski came to power in Poland as a result of a coup. These events, contrary to rumors circulating in the press, did not evoke an overtly negative reaction from Moscow. Meanwhile, Anglo-Soviet relations deteriorated markedly. In February 1927, England accused the USSR of interfering in its internal affairs and fomenting a revolution in China. On 12 May in London, the police searched the premises of the Arcos, and on 27 May London announced

on the severance of diplomatic relations with Moscow. Although Poland approved this move by England, the Polish leadership informed London that it could not follow its example, since it had too long a border with the USSR and had no guarantees of borders with Germany. It is clear that in Moscow, Polish diplomats declared the immutability of friendly relations with their eastern neighbor since February 1926, the parties have been discussing the non-aggression pact proposed by the Soviet side. During the <sup>365</sup>. Tem negotiations, the Polish side tried to link the future agreement with Moscow with similar agreements between the USSR and the Baltic countries and Romania, which naturally aroused fears in the Soviet leadership in the creation of a military-political bloc under the auspices of Poland on the borders of the USSR<sup>366</sup>. Soviet-Latvian negotiations led to the initialing of the neutrality treaty (March 1927), but under pressure from Poland, which declared the need for a coordinated policy towards the USSR, Riga refused to sign it<sup>367</sup>. On June 7, 1927, at the railway station in Warsaw, the White Guard B. Koverda shot dead the Soviet plenipotentiary in Poland P.L. Voikov. Probably, this attempt was organized by British intelligence, in any case, during the trial of Koverda, London asked Warsaw to confine itself to life imprisonment. For its part, the USSR demanded

that Poland comprehensively investigate this crime, allow the Soviet commissioner to investigate and take measures against terrorist and bandit organizations that existed on the territory of Poland. Naturally, Warsaw, which had information about the assassination plot, rejected the Soviet demands,<sup>368</sup> and as a result, the Polish court sentenced the "lone terrorist" to life imprisonment and asked the President of Poland to reduce this term to 15 years. It is clear that Soviet-Polish relations deteriorated. On June 14-15, at a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the countries participating in the Locarno Agreement and Japan in Geneva, they discussed a possible Soviet ultimatum to Poland and measures to help Warsaw through the League of Nations. In the USSR, supporters of L.D. Trotsky declared the need for tough action against Poland. Thus, at the 15th Congress of the CPSU(b), X. Rakovsky proposed "responding with a worthy revolutionary rebuff", including war<sup>369</sup>. But the Soviet leadership

prudently limited itself to diplomatic protests demanding the liquidation of the White Guard organizations on the territory of Poland<sup>370</sup>. But the

example was contagious. On September 2, in Warsaw, the White Guard P. Trajkovich attempted on the Soviet diplomatic courier Schlessler, but was shot dead by his partner I. Gusev. The Polish press accused the Soviet diplomatic workers of acting too harshly. Under these conditions, the Soviet-Polish negotiations on a non-aggression pact were terminated in September 1927 by the Polish side. Meanwhile, since the summer of 1926, the Polish-Lithuanian conflict escalated again. In the autumn of 1927, Poland stepped up its anti-Lithuanian propaganda and tried to enlist the support of England and France in the event of hostilities against Lithuania. For its part, Lithuanian diplomacy appealed to the League of Nations on October 15 with a complaint against Poland, and on November 27, the USSR declared to Poland that it was unacceptable to unleash a war in Eastern Europe and called on the Polish side to be peaceful. Germany has taken a similar position. Since the League of Nations also advocated the preservation of peace, the Polish leadership decided to soften its position. Moscow also advised Lithuania to end the state of war with Poland<sup>371</sup>. On December 10, 1927, after negotiations in Geneva, a Polish-Lithuanian agreement was reached on ending the state of war that had

lasted since 1920.<sup>372</sup> On May 4, 1928, an attempt was made on the life of the Soviet trade representative A.S. Lizarev, which caused new diplomatic correspondence regarding the White Guard organizations in Poland<sup>373</sup>. On September 6, 1928, the USSR joined the Briand-Kellogg Pact and was the only one of all the participating countries to ratify it before the end of the year. On December 29, Moscow invited Poland and Lithuania to sign a protocol on the early entry into force of this treaty. But Warsaw proposed to expand the list of participants in the future agreement by involving Romania, Latvia and Estonia. Upon learning of this, Lithuania refused to participate in the multilateral agreement. In the end, on February 1, 1929, Moscow accepted the Polish proposal, and on February 9, the USSR, Poland, Romania, Latvia and Estonia signed the Moscow Protocol on the early entry into force of the Briand-Kellogg Treaty. Turkey joined the protocol on February 27, Iran on April 3, and Lithuania on April 4. As a result, Poland's influence in the region increased, the western neighbors of the USSR got the opportunity to demonstrate their solidarity, and Soviet-Lithuanian relations cooled<sup>3</sup>.

Meanwhile, considerable changes took place in German-Polish relations. Trade negotiations between Germany and Poland were repeatedly interrupted and resumed again amid a customs war. However, any proposals to improve economic relations with the USSR were rebuffed by the Polish leadership, which referred to the possibility of a negative reaction from Germany. In July 1928, England told Poland that it would not object if Berlin and Warsaw agreed to change the border. On October 31, 1929, the German-Polish Liquidation Agreement was signed, by which the parties renounced financial claims following the results of the First World War<sup>376</sup>.

In addition, Poland tried to link the 2 billion franc reparations imposed on it by the Treaty of Versailles with the Young Plan in order to eliminate this debt, but Germany, with the approval of France, opposed it. On March 11, 1930, the German Reichstag ratified the Liquidation Agreement, on the same day the German-Polish trade agreement was signed, which never entered into force. The troops of the Western countries, stationed in Upper Silesia since 1920, were evacuated in the summer of 1930 simultaneously with the withdrawal of troops from the Rhine demilitarized zone. In summer

In 1930, German-Polish relations worsened again, the press of both sides actively criticized each other, and incidents took place on the border. All this led to an active discussion of the problem of the eastern German borders in the world press, which, on the whole, was inclined to believe that a new war could break out precisely because of the "Polish corridor". During the election campaign for the Reichstag, the German right-wing political parties frankly declared that the eastern border was temporary, and the lands lost under the Treaty of Versailles in the east should be returned. Naturally, Poland protested in connection with such statements by German officials, the Polish public organized demonstrations, and in some places even protests against the German minority. All protests from Berlin were rejected by Warsaw with reference to German actions. Against the backdrop of this tense situation, the Polish leadership

reacted calmly to the electoral success of the NSDAP, which was more anti-communist than revanchist propaganda. Therefore, according to Warsaw, the strengthening of the influence of the Nazis was a kind of guarantee both against the expansion of Soviet-German cooperation, which was always painfully perceived in Poland, and against the immediate revision of the German-Polish border. In the meantime, at the insistence of England, on January 12, 1931, the allied Military Committee at Versailles, which exercised control over

Germany's compliance with the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. Thus, the already not very tight control was actually eliminated, which made it easier for Germany to prepare for the reconstruction of the armed forces. On March 19, 1931, Germany and Austria concluded an agreement on a customs union, which was perceived with concern in Poland, but with approval in the business circles of Western countries, who considered this process as the beginning of the unification of Europe. Warsaw's attempts to win support from England and France during 1931 showed that these countries were more inclined to an agreement with Germany, which continued the anti-Polish campaign in the press.

From November 1930, Poland tried to create the appearance of negotiations with the USSR on the conclusion of a non-aggression pact and widely used this in its relations with third countries, including Germany, in an effort to worsen German-Soviet relations. The impetus for this was the confidential conversations of the Soviet plenipotentiary representative in Warsaw V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, undertaken on his own initiative, with the leadership of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>377</sup>. On January 5, 1931, Moscow pointed out to Warsaw that the information about the new Polish proposals from the USSR was unfounded, and on January 6 this was reported in the TASS Statement<sup>378</sup>. On January 29, the Soviet side again pointed out the groundlessness of the Polish version and asked if Poland's attitude towards the Soviet proposal had changed<sup>379</sup>. But Warsaw's unchanging position made negotiations impossible. In the summer of 1931, when it became clear that the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression and trade treaties was not far off, the Polish leadership had to think about expanding its influence in Eastern Europe. On August 10, the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact<sup>380</sup> was initialed, and Paris decided that Poland should be persuaded to a similar agreement. On August 23, under pressure from France, Poland handed over to the Soviet side a document in which the Soviet proposals of 1926 and the Polish responses to them were repeated<sup>381</sup>. The USSR was not satisfied with this position of Warsaw, but, since France on September 23 announced that the signing of the Soviet-French treaty was conditional on the achievement of a Soviet-Polish agreement, Moscow suggested that Paris persuade Poland to withdraw the most unfounded objections<sup>382</sup>. At the same time, the Soviet side pointed out the impossibility of linking the two treaties.

Meanwhile, the Franco-German negotiations ended unsuccessfully, and the French leadership decided to continue rapprochement with the USSR. Poland was recommended to take as a basis the agreed text of the Franco-Soviet treaty<sup>383</sup>. However, Soviet-Polish contacts showed that Warsaw was once again trying to link the Soviet-Polish treaty with similar agreements between the USSR and its Western neighbors<sup>384</sup>. In <sup>IN</sup> December 1931, Latvia and Finland offered the USSR to resume negotiations on the conclusion of non-aggression pacts. The negotiations were conducted in a constructive manner and without any reference to the position of Poland. As a result, already on January 21, 1932, an agreement was signed with Finland, and on February 5 - with Latvia<sup>385</sup>. Negotiations with Romania stalled because of the unresolved Bessarabian issue. Under these conditions, Poland was forced to soften its position, and on January 25, 1932, the Soviet-Polish treaty was initialed<sup>386</sup>. However, this time, the course of the negotiations was influenced by some cooling of France towards signing an agreement with the USSR, which immediately caused a similar reaction in Warsaw. True, the aggravation of German-Polish relations and the situation in Danzig, in conditions when England, France and Italy put pressure on Poland, trying to persuade her to make concessions, as well as the policy of the Baltic countries forced Warsaw to receive a guarantee from

the war in the east. The deterioration of German-

Polish relations by the end of 1931 led to the fact that on December 21, Poland increased customs duties on German goods, and naturally, on January 23, 1932, Germany did the same with respect to Polish goods. In response, Poland carried out a number of measures to strengthen its troops on the border with Danzig, East Prussia and Silesia.

During 1932, a disarmament conference was held in Geneva, which ultimately boiled down to finding a formula that would allow Germany to gain equal rights to armaments. During the conference, Poland tried to get guarantees of its borders with Germany, but this goal was never achieved. In June 1932, at a meeting of representatives of the general staffs of the Little Entente and Poland, the latter undertook to field 60 divisions against the USSR in case of war. At the same time, the Polonization program began to be actively carried out in the places of residence of the German minority. Meanwhile, the Senate of the Free City of Danzig refused to renew the convention allowing the Polish Navy to use the port as its own. The Polish leadership decided to demonstrate force, and on June 15, 1932, the Polish destroyer *Wiher* entered the Danzig raid, which had orders to open fire in the event of an attack or insult to the Polish flag. The leadership of Danzig filed a complaint with the League of Nations, which condemned Poland's actions.

On July 25, 1932, Germany acceded to the Anglo-French "Confidence Pact" signed in Lausanne. Under these conditions, trying to emphasize their independent foreign policy, the Polish leadership on July 25 signed a non-aggression pact with the USSR, which was ratified by Poland on November 26, and the USSR on November 27 after the signing of the Soviet-Polish convention on conciliation on November 23. After the exchange of instruments of ratification on December 23, 1932, the Soviet-Polish treaty entered into force<sup>37</sup>. At the same time, Warsaw tried to establish contacts with Germany, but Berlin showed no interest in this, and in the autumn of 1932 German-Polish relations deteriorated again. On December 11, 1932, England, France, Italy, the USA and Germany reached an agreement on the latter's equal rights in the field of armaments. Although Germany gradually modernized the armed forces, the Polish army was far superior to the German one, which gave the German leadership an excellent excuse to demand re-armament. Under these conditions, Poland, fearing the final loss of French support, decided to normalize relations with Germany. An important motive for the

new foreign policy strategy of Warsaw was the deterioration of Soviet-German relations associated with the coming to power in Germany of A. Hitler<sup>38</sup>. Naturally, The Polish leadership decided to try to play on the German-Soviet contradictions, not realizing that in this case it would have to make a choice. It is possible that the aggravation of the situation in the Far East, where the threat of a Soviet-Japanese war arose, also pushed Warsaw towards a new policy towards Berlin. At the same time, the Polish leadership believed that by agreeing to the normalization of relations with Germany, it should demonstrate strength. Therefore, when on February

16, 1933, the Danzig Senate decided to liquidate the special port police, on the night of March 6, the Polish landing force occupied Westerplatte. However, Germany's complaint to the League of Nations forced Warsaw to retreat. A week later, in the capitals of the great powers of Europe, the discussion of the "Pact of Four" proposed by B. Mussolini began. Naturally, Poland and other Eastern European allies of France did not support the idea of such an agreement<sup>39</sup>. However, it soon became clear that the small countries had no real levers of influence, and gradually their criticism of the Pact of Four subsided. In the wake of this criticism in Prague, the idea arose to include Poland in the Little Entente, but Warsaw believed that it was more important to get Teshin, which belonged to Czechoslovakia.

It is clear that Berlin was apprehensive about the threat of a united Franco-Polish-Soviet front, and the German leadership decided to compromise with Warsaw, which had repeatedly demonstrated its readiness to normalize relations. On March 23, 1933, Poland and the USSR informed each other about their negative attitude towards the Pact of Four. Poland also expressed its dissatisfaction with England and France, but not with Germany, with which it was decided to reach an agreement. At the same time, Poland tried to put pressure on Germany (the events in Danzig, demonstrations in Poland and rumors about the readiness for a joint Frankopol preventive military action against Germany), which received an excellent opportunity to refer to these actions to justify the need for rearmament. In the meantime, the USSR supported and expanded the French plan for ensuring security in Europe and submitted a convention on the definition of the aggressor (attacker) to the disarmament conference. On April 9, the USSR invited Poland to take part in a conference to sign a convention on the definition of aggression, but Warsaw, which generally approved this idea, suggested that Moscow first regulate its relations with Romania.

In May 1933, Poland began an active sounding of Germany for the normalization of relations, which found a certain response in Berlin. However, at an international conference in London, the German representative again raised the issue of revising the German border in the east, and on June 7 the Pact of the Four was initialed. Meanwhile, the Soviet press supported the position of Poland regarding the German-Polish border and condemned the German revanchist calls. At the same time, the countries of the Little Entente supported the Soviet idea of defining aggression at a conference on disarmament, and in July Czechoslovakia offered Moscow to sign a non-aggression pact with the Little Entente. On June 24, Romania also announced its readiness to sign a convention on the definition of aggression.

Under these conditions, Poland had to agree to the Soviet proposal, but Warsaw advocated the signing of a regional convention, and not open to signing by all comers. Thus, the Polish leadership demonstrated its independence and tried to put pressure on Germany, in fact supporting its fears about signing an open document. In addition, Warsaw opposed the participation in the convention of the countries of the Little Entente, since this could hurt the interests of Hungary and Italy, with which Poland had good relations. As a result, on July 3, the USSR, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan signed a regional protocol, and on July 4, the USSR, Czechoslovakia,

Romania, Yugoslavia and Turkey have signed an open convention on the definition of aggression<sup>393</sup>. Meanwhile, the normalization of German-Polish relations began on economic issues and regarding Danzig. It is clear that many observers regarded this as

<sup>394</sup> ➤

the start of German-Polish cooperation. In July,

Poland was visited by the head of the Bureau of International Information of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, K. Radek, who concluded on the basis of the trip that there is "a real possibility of our further rapprochement with Poland, although the process of this rapprochement may be protracted and contradictory"<sup>5</sup>. Based on these assessments, the Soviet side offered Poland further rapprochement, but Warsaw remained silent, only reinforcing Moscow's fears about a possible German-Polish friendship.

On July 15, a Pact of Accord and Cooperation was signed in Rome between England, France, Italy and Germany ("Pact of the Four")<sup>396</sup>. Attempts by the USSR to indicate to Poland that there was a threat from Germany were brushed aside by the Polish leadership, which believed that the Nazis would be able to break with the traditional anti-Polish policy of Berlin. In Warsaw, it was believed that Germany would not be able to restore its military potential for a long time and would be forced to be satisfied with the absorption of Austria. In September 1933, German-Polish negotiations began on ending the customs war. On October 14, the German leadership announced the withdrawal of its representatives from the disarmament conference, and there was a threat of sanctions against Berlin by the League of Nations. On the same day, Poland assured Germany that it would not join any sanctions against it. On October 19, Germany withdrew from the League of Nations<sup>398</sup> and declared its readiness to sign non-aggression pacts with all comers. It is clear that under these conditions, Berlin was interested in an agreement with its eastern neighbor, which would make it possible to strike at the system of French alliances in Eastern Europe and demonstrate its peacefulness<sup>399</sup>.

On September 1, 1933, Prince Sapieha, in a public lecture on the international situation, criticized the convention signed with the USSR on the definition of an aggressor and argued that the German-Polish agreement should become the main goal of Polish foreign policy. In his opinion, the Anschluss is beneficial for Poland, since it will remove the pressure of German nationalism on the Polish borders and turn the attention of German politics towards the Balkans. "We were faced with the question of whether we would be an outpost of Europe expanding eastward, or would we be a barrier blocking the path of European expansion to the East. Gentlemen, history will destroy this barrier and our country will become a battlefield between East and West. Therefore, we must become an outpost of Europe, and our foreign policy task is to prepare for this role and in every possible way to promote European solidarity and European expansion ..."<sup>400</sup> Although formally the opinion of the prince remained the opinion of a private person, however, the ideas voiced by him were shared by a certain part of the Polish elites.

### **"Equilibrium" in Poland's politics**

Germany's withdrawal from the disarmament conference and the League of Nations led to its international isolation, which, along with the deterioration of Soviet-German relations, was seen by Poland as a favorable Moment for reaching an agreement. The Polish leadership once again decided to show its strength and ability for an independent policy. By notifying Berlin that it did not intend to participate in any sanctions against it, Warsaw received German assurances of its desire to normalize relations. On November 15, an oral agreement was reached between the Polish ambassador in Berlin, J. Lipsky, and Hitler, on the refusal to use force, which, in the opinion of the Reich Chancellor, could later be transformed into an agreement. On November 16, a German-Polish communiqué was published, in which both parties pledged not to "recourse to violence to resolve their disputes." Informing the Soviet side on November 16 about the normalization of relations with Germany, the Polish representative spoke in the sense that relations with the USSR were completed by a non-aggression pact, while relations with Germany were only just beginning to develop. If we take into account that both the Polish and the German press created the impression that there were some kind of tacit agreements, it is clear that this was perceived with apprehension in Moscow. Of course, Warsaw was not going to worsen relations with the USSR at the moment, and on November 23, Foreign Minister Yu. Beck expressed to the Soviet plenipotentiary in Warsaw Antonov-Ovseenko a wish to coordinate the policies of both countries in the Baltic States. Soviet diplomacy decided to obtain additional information about Poland's intentions<sup>402</sup>.

towards Germany Therefore, when on December 14 Poland offered the USSR to expand contacts, Moscow reacted positively to this, asked Poland about its attitude to Germany's rearmament plans and offered to sign a declaration of interest in the inviolability of the Baltic states<sup>403</sup>. Tem



In the meantime, France offered the USSR an agreement on mutual assistance, and on December 19 Moscow initiated the idea of a multilateral agreement, which did not arouse enthusiasm in Warsaw, which referred to the need to inform the Baltic countries. Poland was given an invitation to Beck to visit the USSR<sup>404</sup>. Information about Soviet-Polish contacts regarding a guarantee to the Baltics caused a negative reaction in Berlin, so Germany threatened to interrupt the negotiations with Poland on a non-aggression pact that had begun on November 27. Naturally, on January 9, 1934, Warsaw assured Berlin that without its consent it would not sign a declaration on the Baltic. Therefore, all Soviet proposals for the speedy signing of the Baltic declaration were not supported by the Polish side. On January 11, Poland officially notified Moscow of the negotiations with Germany and offered to postpone the signing of the declaration until Beck's visit to Moscow in mid-February<sup>405</sup>.

The Polish leadership believed that the agreement with Germany, which they considered as an equalization of the Western tilt of the Locarno agreements, would radically change the position of the country in Europe. On January 26, 1934, the German-Polish declaration on the peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force<sup>406</sup> was signed. The parties declared peace and friendship, the customs war and mutual criticism in the press were curtailed. In Warsaw, this document was perceived as the basis of the country's security and a means of intensifying Poland's great-power aspirations. Germany managed to ensure that the issue of the border was passed over in silence in the declaration, and the attempts of the USSR to explain to Poland that it had been carried out, of course, were not crowned with success. Since the declaration itself was a very laconic document, rumors immediately arose in the press that there was some kind of secret appendix to it<sup>407</sup>. The Germanopol agreement, which was a blow to France's system of alliances in Eastern Europe, aroused fear among their neighbors, but received the encouragement of England and Italy. The agreement excluded Poland from any collective

security systems, which, of course, played into the hands of Germany<sup>408</sup>. On February 1 and 3, Poland finally refused to sign, together with the USSR, a declaration on

the Baltic states. During Beck's visit to Moscow on February 13-15, 1934, an agreement was reached on the transformation of diplomatic missions into embassies, and the parties agreed to extend the non-aggression pact<sup>410</sup>. During the negotiations that began on March 25, the Polish side proposed extending the treaty for 2 years, followed by multiple extensions, while the Soviet side proposed a 10-year term. In response, Warsaw wanted to link this issue with the extension of similar treaties between the USSR and the Baltic countries and the conclusion of the Soviet-Romanian treaty. Moscow then passed this proposal on to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland, who a few days later expressed their consent,<sup>41</sup> forcing Poland to do the same on 31 March. Poland's attempts to link the extension of the non-aggression pact with the USSR's recognition of the Vilnius region as part of Poland did not find support in Moscow, and the agreements with the Baltic countries on April 4 were a blow to Warsaw's prestige and prompted it to sign a protocol on the extension of the treaty until December 31, 1945 on May 5.<sup>412</sup>

Thus, Moscow received confirmation that Poland did not have a secret agreement with Germany regarding territories in the east, since the agreement confirmed Article 3 of the Riga Treaty on the absence of territorial claims. However, the prevailing opinion among the Polish military was that the USSR was a stronger enemy than Germany<sup>413</sup>. France reacted rather reservedly to the German-Polish agreement, and Paris decided to activate the idea of the Eastern Pact. The discussion of the idea of the Eastern Pact between Paris and Moscow, which began in the autumn of 1933, led in the spring of 1934 to the appearance of a draft agreement providing for the conclusion of an agreement between the USSR, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic countries and a Soviet-French treaty of mutual assistance related to the Eastern Pact and Locarno agreements. It was assumed that France would provide assistance to the USSR in the event of an attack on it by any of the participants in the Eastern Pact, and Soviet assistance to France was carried out in the event of an attack on it by any of the participants in the Locarno agreements. For France, the implementation of this project was due to the entry of the USSR into the League of Nations, and Moscow considered it mandatory for France and Poland to participate in the agreement. However, French soundings of Poland on the subject of its participation in the projected agreement showed that the Polish leadership is cautious about multilateral agreements and fears the strengthening of the international influence of the USSR.

The Franco-Polish negotiations that began on May 19-26, 1934 on Warsaw's participation in the Eastern Pact<sup>414</sup> showed that France's ally was playing its own diplomatic game, the leadership Polish first proposed including Romania in the future agreement, then opposed Czechoslovakia's participation in it, and in the end, Germany's participation in it became a prerequisite for Poland's participation in the Eastern Pact. Putting forward such a condition, Warsaw was well informed that

Berlin is not going to participate in the agreement, that is, it was a well-formed refusal. Moreover, Poland was not only against involving the USSR in any multilateral agreements in Europe, but even against its entry into the League of Nations. In this case, Warsaw's fears that it was the USSR that would take the place of a permanent member of the Council of this organization, vacated after Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, which Poland claimed, had an effect. In addition, the Polish leadership was afraid that the USSR would raise the issue of national minorities in Poland in the League of Nations and the international influence of the USSR would increase significantly, which would make it even more difficult for Poland to achieve the status of a great power. In particular, Warsaw feared that it would lose its chances for uniting the countries of Eastern Europe under its influence and that its value as an ally in the eyes

of France would drop sharply. On the other hand, the Polish leadership in the summer of 1934 hoped that the USSR would have difficulties in relations with Japan, which would allow Warsaw to take a tougher stance towards its eastern neighbor. It is clear that under these conditions Moscow hoped to neutralize France, Germany and Poland with the help of the Eastern Pact, ensuring the calm of its western borders. In general, the negotiations on the Eastern Pact in the summer-autumn of 1934 showed that England, Germany and Poland opposed this agreement, which negatively perceived this idea. The German leadership was afraid that such an agreement would make expansion impossible, and the Polish leadership would lose the opportunity to become a great power due to the growing influence of the USSR in Europe. As a result, the clearly negative position of Poland regarding the Eastern Pact gave rise to a wave of rumors about secret German-Polish cooperation. Moreover, such a position of Poland became for England a convenient cover for her negative attitude towards this agreement.

Warsaw was especially annoyed by the right of passage of troops of other participating countries through its territory, provided for by the draft agreement, which, under certain conditions, the Red Army could also use. On the eve of the admission of the USSR to the League of Nations, Poland decided to show its importance, although the diplomatic pressure of England and France deprived it of the opportunity to openly oppose it. On September 4, Warsaw demanded that Moscow confirm all Soviet-Polish treaties by September 7. Naturally, the USSR was in no hurry to fulfill this "request", although it agreed. Later, Poland demanded that instead of an exchange of notes, a communiqué be published in the press. It is clear that the more haste Warsaw showed, the more unperturbed Moscow behaved. As a result, on the evening of September 10, the parties agreed to exchange the relevant notes after the admission of the USSR to the League of Nations, and Poland announced the possibility of supporting the candidacy of the USSR<sup>415</sup>.

On September 13, the Polish Foreign Minister announced in the League of Nations that Warsaw refused to cooperate with it in protecting the rights of national minorities until a similar system was introduced for all member countries of this organization. Behind this statement was Warsaw's fear that Moscow might raise the issue of the rights of the Belarusian and Ukrainian population of Poland. Numerous observers regarded this move by Poland as pro-German and anti-Soviet. On September 18, the USSR was admitted to the League of Nations. Meanwhile, negotiations on the Eastern Pact finally reached an impasse, since neither Germany nor Poland agreed to participate in this association. On September 28, Warsaw notified Paris that it was ready "from now on to link its fate with the fate of Germany and reject the draft Eastern Pact." In addition, the Polish government considers itself "henceforth free from any obligations with regard to Czechoslovakia and recalls its desire to establish a common border with Hungary"<sup>416</sup>. The assassination on October 9, 1934 in Marseilles of the French Foreign Minister and an active supporter of the Eastern Pact, L. Barthou, led to the fact that henceforth for Paris this idea became only a means of pressure on Berlin in order to force it to an agreement with France.

On November 1, the diplomatic missions of Germany and Poland were mutually transformed into embassies, which, according to observers, was another step towards their rapprochement. Meanwhile, the sluggish Franco-Polish negotiations on the Eastern Pact showed that, without German participation, Poland would not agree to sign this agreement. Trying to emphasize its leading position in Eastern Europe, Poland in the autumn of 1934 tried to put pressure on Lithuania again in order to achieve the restoration of diplomatic relations, which was considered by the Polish leadership as Lithuania's recognition of the existing Polish-Lithuanian border. At the same time, Polish-Czechoslovak relations also deteriorated. It is clear that all these actions of Warsaw received the invariable approval of Berlin, which in every possible way emphasized the new state of German-Polish relations. During Goering's visit to Poland on January 27-31, 1935,<sup>417</sup> Warsaw once again confirmed its uncompromising position on the problem of the Eastern Pact. Moreover, it became known about the attempts of England to revive the "Pact of Four" again; this gave rise to hopes in Poland that it might be invited to this agreement. England proposed to supplement the Eastern Pact with a "military convention", which allowed Germany to rearm.

Under these conditions, Poland calmly accepted the German statements of March 10-16, 1935, on the refusal to comply with the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. True, in the League of Nations the Polish representative voted for a resolution condemning the actions of Berlin. This unilateral German move eventually led to the signing of the Soviet-French and Soviet-Czechoslovak mutual assistance treaties. For its part, Poland in May 1935 notified France not to count on Warsaw's automatic support of the Soviet-French mutual assistance treaty. The death of J. Pilsudski on May 12, 1935 gave rise to fears in Berlin that the new Polish leadership would return to a pro-French policy, but already on July 2-4, Polish Foreign Minister J. Beck assured Hitler that Warsaw would continue "the line of January 26, 1934" 419 Although inside Germany the revanchist propaganda never stopped, the Polish leadership perceived it mainly as a concession of the Nazi leadership to the conservative circles of German society. On November 24, the parties signed a trade agreement, granting each other the most favored nation treatment. All the time, the German leadership reminded Warsaw that it was anti-Sovietism that was the reliable basis of German-Polish friendship, thereby Germany made it impossible for the Polish-Soviet rapprochement. The signing of non-aggression treaties with the USSR and Germany

made it possible, in the opinion of the Polish leadership, to take a tougher stance on a number of international problems, demonstrating their great-power aspirations. Developments in the second half of the 1930s showed that the position of Poland, as a rule, was closer to the position of Germany and sharply diverged from the position of the USSR. This was especially evident during the discussion of the idea of the Eastern Pact, in Warsaw's reaction to the news of the conclusion of the Soviet-French and May 16 Soviet-Czechoslovak mutual assistance treaties, as well as in relation to the civil war in Spain<sup>420</sup>. Moreover, in the first case, it was the position of Poland that became one of the reasons that France refused to conclude a military convention with the USSR. In January 1936, the French War Office stated that "a military alliance with Poland is incompatible with a Russian military alliance. You have to choose." As you know, Paris chose Warsaw, not Moscow.

In February 1936, Minister of the Third Reich G. Frank visited Poland, once again demonstrating German-Polish friendship. The occupation of the Rhine demilitarized zone by German troops and the violation of the Locarno agreements did not cause any objections from Poland, especially since France did not take any countermeasures. Confident that this would be the case, the Polish Foreign Minister on March 7 informed Paris of his readiness to support France in the event of a conflict with Germany. By proposing to England, France, Belgium and Italy to conclude treaties on

non-aggression on

25 years, Germany referred to a similar agreement with Poland in 1934. The rejection of the Locarno agreements eliminated both the guarantee agreement between France and Poland, as well as the German-Polish arbitration agreement, replaced by an agreement of January 26, 1934. June 27, 1936 Poland officially lifted sanctions against Italy, hoping for rapprochement with Rome<sup>422</sup>. July 24

1936 Germany introduced a two-year military service, and Poland decided to seek a Franco-Germanopol agreement. In relations with

Germany, Poland supported its anti-communist activities and favorably assessed the creation of the Anti-Comintern Pact. And although Warsaw evaded proposals to enter into this pact and establish closer ties with Germany on an anti-Soviet basis, its refusal was due to the traditional desire to preserve the possibility of further maneuvering in order to achieve the status of a great power<sup>423</sup>. Poland considered the creation of an alliance with Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Italy to be the basis of its great-power policy, on the basis of which Warsaw hoped to continue the "balance policy" towards Berlin and Moscow. It is clear that Germany and the USSR, for various reasons, opposed these aspirations of Poland, while at the same time trying to use some of Warsaw's diplomatic steps in their own interests. The Polish leadership considered Czechoslovakia the main obstacle to the implementation of the "Third Europe" plan and made a lot of efforts to isolate it within the Little Entente. In addition, Polish diplomacy supported those actions of Yugoslavia and Romania that led to a departure from the French system of alliances and to the establishment of contacts with Hungary. But until the end of the 1930s, these aspirations of Poland were not fully realized.

For its part, Germany, starting to revise the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, was interested in the neutrality of England and Poland. Therefore, in 1936-1937. Berlin repeatedly demonstrated its location to Warsaw. November 5

In 1937, the German-Polish declaration on attitudes towards national minorities was signed, which formally meant the settlement of an important problem of bilateral relations. At the same time, Berlin assured Warsaw that the status of Danzig would remain unchanged, as would the preservation of all Poland's rights in the "free city". All this was regarded in Warsaw as a clear confirmation of Germany's desire for further normalization of relations with Poland, which could lead at least to a benevolent neutrality of Poland, and at a maximum to a German-Polish alliance. In addition, Germany has stepped up its anti-communist and anti-Soviet rhetoric, which met with a quite favorable reception in Warsaw, although the matter has not yet gone beyond general talk. In connection with rumors about Poland's rapprochement with the Anti-Comintern Pact, on November 12, 1937, Warsaw declared that it did not seek to join it, but was and would be fighting "against the influence of the Comintern within the country"<sup>424</sup>. **Along the Path of Expansion** At the same

time, it should be remembered that the Polish leadership completely misjudged the situation in Germany, believing that the Nazi regime was weak and did not pose a serious threat. Therefore, Warsaw

On January 14, 1938, informed by Berlin of the impending Anschluss, she calmly reacted to the events of March 11-12, 1938, regarding them as "Austria's internal affair." Like other European countries, Poland

took no action, tacitly acknowledging the expansion of the Third. Moreover, the strengthening of Reich<sup>425</sup> revisionist sentiments in the international politics of Warsaw tried to take advantage of. On March 11, 1938, the corpse of a Polish border guard was discovered on the Lithuanian-Polish demarcation line. On March 13, Poland blamed Lithuania for this and rejected its proposal to set up a mixed commission to investigate the incident. The Polish side hinted to Kaunas that it expects the restoration of diplomatic relations, which, according to the Polish leadership, would become the basis for the recognition of the existing border by Lithuania and the inclusion of the Vilna region in Poland. A campaign was launched in the Polish press with calls to teach Lithuania a lesson and organize a campaign against Kaunas. Naturally, Germany

and the USSR decided to express their opinion. On March 16, the German side notified Warsaw that its interests in Lithuania were limited only to Memel (Klaipeda), while in the rest Poland was given complete freedom of hands. True, the German leadership took a number of measures that would allow, in the event of a Polish-Lithuanian war, to occupy Memel and some other territories of Lithuania. Germany advised Lithuania to accept the Polish ultimatum, and Poland was asked to inform Berlin in a timely manner about further steps regarding Kaunas. On the evening of March 16 M.M. Litvinov invited the Polish ambassador to Moscow, W. Grzybowski, to him and told him that the USSR was interested in resolving the Polish-Lithuanian dispute "exclusively by peaceful means and that

violent actions can create danger in the whole east of Europe"<sup>426</sup>. On the night of March 17, Lithuania was presented with a Polish ultimatum demanding the restoration of diplomatic relations with Warsaw and the removal of the mention of Vilna from the Lithuanian constitution as the capital of the state. The consent of Kaunas had to be expressed within 48 hours, and the accreditation of diplomats had to take place before March 31, otherwise Warsaw threatened to use force. On March 18, Moscow advised Kaunas to "give way to violence" because "the international community will not understand the Lithuanian refusal." On March 18, the Soviet side once again indicated to Poland that it was interested in maintaining the independence of Lithuania and was opposed to starting a war. In conditions when France also asked Poland not to bring the matter to war, the Polish side somewhat softened the terms of its ultimatum. In <sup>427</sup>.

domestic historiography, these events are assessed inconsistently. V.Ya. Sipols believes that Poland's capture of Lithuania "was saved only by the energetic intervention of the <sup>428</sup>. S.Z. The case, on the contrary, USSR" believes that "Lithuania did not receive any support from the USSR at that moment"<sup>429</sup>. Apparently, as is often the case, both opinions are extreme assessments of the current situation. It seems that the assertion that the Soviet Union did not support Lithuania would be justified if Soviet diplomacy did not react at all to the events around Lithuania. On the other hand, the Soviet intervention could not have been overly vigorous, for this would have meant direct involvement of the USSR in the Polish-Lithuanian conflict. This, in turn, would certainly lead to a deterioration in the already difficult Soviet-Polish relations and would only push Warsaw into the arms of Berlin, which Moscow was trying to avoid in any case. If we take into account that at that time the USSR was actively involved in the civil war in Spain, and England and France did not react in any way to the Anschluss of Austria and demonstrated "non-intervention" in the Spanish war, in which Germany and Italy were widely involved, absolutely

it is obvious that the Soviet side simply could not afford any other actions, except for clear, but rather calm diplomatic statements about their interests in the south of the Baltic states. As, however, could not afford to remain silent. It is quite possible that such a position of Moscow was assessed in Warsaw and Berlin as a very limited opportunity to influence the development of events in Eastern Europe<sup>430</sup>, but this assessment was based not so much on the actions of the USSR in the Polish-Lithuanian conflict, but to a much greater extent on the general European situation. and the position of Britain and France towards the Soviet Union.

As you know, after the Anschluss of Austria, the German leadership believed that the time had come to resolve the Czechoslovak question. Using the presence of the German national minority in the border regions of Czechoslovakia, Germany in October 1933 organized the "Fatherland Front of the Sudeten Germans" (OFSN) there, headed by K. Henlein, which was to become the main tool in updating the Czechoslovak question. On the instructions of Berlin, received at the end of March, at the Congress of the OFSN in Karlovy Vary on April 23-24, 1938, demands were put forward for the Czechoslovak government to transform the state on a federal basis, allow free propaganda of the German worldview (Nazism), break the mutual assistance agreement with the USSR and to subordinate the foreign policy of Czechoslovakia to Germany. Thus, under the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination, the impetus was given to the Czechoslovak crisis.

The events that led to the Munich Agreement have been sufficiently well studied<sup>431</sup>, so here we should dwell only on those that relate to our topic. As you know, the determining factor in the development of international relations in Europe was the relationship between England, France, Germany and Italy. It was England that became the force that tried to modernize the Versailles system by creating a new balance of power in continental Europe. The result of this British policy was the connivance of any actions of Germany, starting with its withdrawal from the League of Nations in October 1933. Not wanting to contribute to the creation of the system of collective security proposed by France in Europe, London actually supported the intransigent position of Poland and Germany regarding the Eastern Pact. Even when, in March 1935, Germany openly violated the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, England, although it condemned these actions, entered into bilateral negotiations on naval issues, as a result of which Germany received a legal opportunity to create a navy. The main motive of the British leadership was to prevent the deepening of the crisis in Europe, which should have allowed England to maintain its international influence.

Counting on the creation of an agreement of the great powers of Europe under its auspices, England feared that the collapse of the fascist regime in Italy and the Nazi regime in Germany would lead to the Bolshevization of these countries and thereby sharply increase the threat to the positions of London. Therefore, despite the sometimes rather harsh rhetoric regarding the actions of Italy and Germany, England tried to keep all the doors open for an agreement with them. This explains the fact that when the Wehrmacht occupied the Rhineland, London in every possible way kept Paris from any countermeasures. During the discussion of this

issue in the Council of the League of Nations on March 14-19, 1936, it was decided to refrain from any action. The Soviet proposal of March 17 about readiness to support any action of the League of Nations<sup>432</sup> naturally remained unanswered. If we take into account that on February 16 the Popular Front came to power in Spain, which was perceived by the conservative British leadership almost as the Bolshevization of the country, then the position of England will be quite logical. The anti-communist rhetoric of Berlin found favorable listeners on the banks of the Thames. Therefore, when in Spain on July 18, 1936, a civil war began and the republican government had to practically re-create a land army, it was England, under the pretext of the danger of war with Germany and Italy, that put pressure on France so that it would not sell weapons to Madrid.

Intimidating France with the threat of its neutrality in the event of an aggravation of Franco-Italian and Franco-German relations, London obtained support from Paris for its policy of "non-intervention" in Spanish events. It is clear that the Italo-German assistance to Franco was no secret to anyone, as, indeed, the fact that England and France turn a blind eye to this blatant violation of the policy of "non-intervention". However, when in October 1936 the USSR declared its support for Madrid, this did not at all improve its relations with Britain and France. Continuing the policy of "non-interference", the Western countries usually referred to the threat of war with Germany and Italy and to their military weakness. This, however, did not prevent them, when in August-September 1937 "unknown" (Italian) submarines attacked British ships near Spain, to show firmness. At the conference of the Mediterranean countries and the USSR in Nyon on September 14, it was decided to sink all submarines that did not indicate their

nationality upon request. And incidents with "unknown" submarines, as if on cue, stopped. All this once again testifies that only one threat from England and France would be enough to bring both Rome and Berlin to their senses. However, a tough stance towards Germany threatened the collapse of the Nazi regime, which, in the opinion of the British leadership, was a much more serious threat than German expansion, which could well have been directed eastward.

At that moment, the idea of drawing the USSR into a war with Germany or Japan became literally an *idéfex* in London. For example, during the Brussels Conference on events in China, the Soviet Union was asked to mobilize and launch air raids on Tokyo, while Britain and the United States were going to limit themselves to a naval demonstration. England itself refused to restrict the export of military materials to Japan, as this would hit the pockets of very influential people. It is no coincidence that in the course of contacts with the German leadership on November 19

In 1937, the Lord Chairman of the Royal Privy Council of England E. Halifax, and on December 2 the British Foreign Minister A. Eden notified Berlin that London was not against revising the borders in Eastern Europe, but considered the prevention of war as an indispensable condition. The French leadership actually supported this British position<sup>433</sup>. Thus, Berlin was pointed out to the possibility of an agreement with the West, or, as the English Prime Minister N. Chamberlain declared on February 21, 1938, "peace in Europe must depend on the position of the main powers of Germany, Italy, France and our own"<sup>434</sup>. In other words, Germany received *carte blanche* for any actions in Eastern Europe that did not lead to open war. Naturally, under these conditions, the German leadership decided to intensify its foreign policy towards its neighbors. As is known, the seizure of Austria by Germany did not meet with any objections in England and France, although it was a direct violation of the Versailles and Saint-Germain treaties, which were signed by them.

It is clear that such a position of England and France only provoked Germany, and it was decided to move on to solving the Czechoslovak question. At the end of 1936, Berlin offered Prague an agreement on eternal peace and Germany's right to support compatriots in the Sudetenland, but the Czechoslovak leadership rejected this proposal. During the Anschluss, Germany assured Czechoslovakia that nothing threatened her.

Moreover, on March 14, 1938, France declared that in the event of an attack on Czechoslovakia, it would support it. On March 24, England also hinted to Berlin that in the event of French intervention, she would be forced to support Paris. At the same time, the Soviet proposal of March 17 to convene a conference to discuss the situation that had arisen was rejected by Britain. Therefore, after it became clear that the Western powers tacitly acknowledged the removal of Austria from the political map of Europe, anti-Czech propaganda, which had begun in Germany in the spring of 1937, sharply intensified. In the Sudetes, the OFSN launched a noisy campaign of struggle for the rights of national minorities.

Military planning of the operation against Czechoslovakia began in Germany at least in the summer of 1935. As noted in the directive **"On the unified preparation of the armed forces for war"** of June 24, 1937, the Wehrmacht must be ready to **"quickly,**

**suddenly, having gathered all his might into a fist, to carry out an invasion of Czechoslovakia and at the same time only a minimum of forces remained in the West as a rear cover for this offensive operation. The goal and task of this operation ... should be as follows: after defeating the enemy's armed forces and taking possession of Bohemia and Moravia, in advance and for the entire period of the war, eliminate the threat of an attack by Czechoslovakia from the rear, in order to free their hands to wage war in the West and take away from Russian aviation the most important part of its base of operations, which could be located on the territory of Czechoslovakia"**<sup>435</sup>.

That is, initially the war with Czechoslovakia was considered by the German leadership as an integral part of the conflict between Germany and France and the USSR. However, as the positions of England and France were clarified, the German military plans became more specific.

Already on December 7, 1937, the German command stated that "the process of changing the foreign policy situation is increasingly pushing into the background" actions against France, "increasing the likelihood of using the Wehrmacht" for an isolated solution of the Czechoslovak problem<sup>436</sup>. A little later, on December 21, the Wehrmacht received an updated plan for Operation Grun. It was now believed that as soon as the armed forces

Germany will be ready for war, and fortifications will be created on the western border capable of holding back the French offensive, a favorable situation will arise for the defeat of Czechoslovakia. "If a situation favorable to us does not arise, or if it develops slowly in our favor,

then our implementation of the Grün plan must be postponed for a few more years. But if, as a result of England's fear of a general European war, her disinterest in the affairs of Central Europe, or as a result of a conflict that may break out between Italy and France in the Mediterranean, a situation arises in which no one but Russia will take the side of Czechoslovakia against Germany, then the Grün plan will be put into action before Germany reaches full readiness for war. It is quite obvious that such changes in the assessments of the foreign policy situation were

the result of Anglo-German and Franco-German contacts in November 1937. Four months later, the German military-political leadership decided that these favorable conditions for the defeat of Czechoslovakia had arisen, and on April 21, 1938 At a meeting between Hitler and the Chief of Staff of the High Command of the Wehrmacht (OKW), General W. Keitel, it was already about the specific planning of Operation Grün. A month later, on May 20, the military presented Hitler with a draft operation plan, which he approved with some changes on May 30, 1938. The Wehrmacht was to be ready for the operation no later than

October 1, 1938<sup>438</sup> Although the directive loudly stated that "my unshakable decision is to defeat Czechoslovakia in the near future by conducting a military campaign," but already on June 18, in a new draft directive to the Wehrmacht, Hitler noted: the decision to start the operation "I will take . . . **only if I am firmly convinced, as was the case during the occupation of the demilitarized zone and the entry of troops into Austria, that France will not oppose us and this will not entail the intervention of England**"<sup>TM</sup>. That is, the German leadership was well aware that its actions in the Czechoslovak question completely depended on the position of the Western powers. In the spring of 1938,

England and France took a pro-German position, demanding that Prague come to terms with Henlein. The main goal of England was to pay Czechoslovakia for an agreement with Germany, and at the same time destroy the system of French alliances in Eastern Europe and isolate the Soviet Union. To do this, England sought to give Prague the impression that the OFSN concessions would allow it to gain support in the West. In addition, it was necessary to explain to the Czechoslovak leadership that Soviet assistance was impossible, and most importantly, undesirable. Actually, such a position did not cause any objections in Prague. As stated on May 7

In 1938, in a conversation with the British ambassador in Prague, B. Newton, President E. Benes, he had long wanted to reach an agreement with Germany, but on the condition that Czechoslovakia maintain relations with the West. In his opinion, "Relations between Czechoslovakia and Russia have always been and will always remain a secondary issue, depending on the position of France and Great Britain. Czechoslovakia's current ties with Russia stem entirely from the Franco-Russian treaty, and if Western Europe loses interest in Russia, then Czechoslovakia will lose it too. Czechoslovakia will always follow Western Europe, and will always be associated with it, and will never be associated with Eastern Europe. Any connection with Russia will be maintained only through the West and with its consent .

However, the readiness for concessions expressed by Prague did not at all suit Henlein's Berlin patrons, and on May 15-21, the OFSN organized incidents in the border areas. For its part, the German press raised a fuss about the persecution of compatriots in Czechoslovakia, there were rumors about the concentration of the Wehrmacht on the southern borders of the Third Reich. Fearing a German invasion, Prague announced a partial mobilization, which made it possible to increase the army from 195 thousand to 371 thousand people. England and France were forced on May 21-22 to tell Germany that she should be patient and not plunge Europe into the war that would inevitably break out if she attacked Czechoslovakia, since the Western allies would support Prague. At the same time, Prague was required to demobilize troops and reach an agreement with Henlein. To influence the Czechoslovak leadership on June 21, Lord Runciman was offered to Prague as an intermediary in negotiations with the OFSN. As a result of the negotiations, which were in fact a chain of concessions from the Czechoslovak government, Henlein on September 5 managed to achieve the consent of Prague to all his demands. This caused discontent in Berlin, since it gave the impression that the Sudeten question would be resolved within the framework of Czechoslovakia. Therefore, an incident between the OFSN and the police was provoked in Ostrava, which allowed Henlein to suspend negotiations with Prague. In the meantime, the British press was describing in every way the importance of preserving peace by solving the national question of the Sudeten Germans, preparing public opinion for changing the borders of Czechoslovakia.

Starting to implement its expansionist program in relation to Czechoslovakia, Germany was interested in attracting other countries as allies or accomplices in its division. In this case, such countries could be Poland and Hungary, whose relations with Czechoslovakia were far from friendly. Hungarian-Czechoslovak relations were determined by the fact that Czechoslovakia, as

a member of the Little Entente was the guarantor of the Trianon Treaty, which determined the position of Hungary after the First World War, as well as the presence of a Hungarian national minority in Slovakia. Polish-Czechoslovak relations in the interwar years developed very uneasy. Even during the territorial redistribution of Eastern Europe after the First World War, as already noted, the interests of Warsaw and Prague clashed when resolving the issue of Cieszyn Silesia. Since in the end the Entente decided this issue in favor of Czechoslovakia, the Polish leadership held a grudge. In addition, Warsaw saw in Czechoslovakia the main obstacle to Poland taking the leading position in Eastern Europe and achieving the status of a great power. It was in defiance of Prague that Warsaw maintained good relations with Budapest. Especially clearly the Polish-Czechoslovak problems manifested themselves in the 1930s in the context of the growing crisis of the Versailles system.

Back in the autumn of 1932, Prague offered Warsaw to sign a political treaty and prepare a military treaty, which, of course, evoked the approval of France, but the Polish side kept silent. Once again, Czechoslovakia offered Poland negotiations during the discussion of the Pact of Four, but this time too, Warsaw chose to normalize its relations with Berlin rather than with Prague. True, the Czechoslovak side was also in no hurry to go beyond general talk. In November 1933, Warsaw already offered Prague a military agreement, but it all ended at the level of sounding. At the beginning of 1934, the Polish press launched a campaign in connection with the 15-year-old events in Teszyn, which naturally aroused the concern of the Czechoslovak leadership, who suspected that there was a secret agreement on German-Polish cooperation. In the autumn of 1934, military maneuvers were held in Poland, at which actions were practiced in the event of the collapse of Czechoslovakia or its surrender to Germany. The dissatisfaction of the Polish leadership, which constantly feared a threat to its positions in Eastern Europe, led to the fact that Czechoslovakia recognized the Soviet Union de jure and established diplomatic relations with it.

Poland was wary of reports of Soviet-Czechoslovak negotiations on a mutual assistance treaty. On May 7, 1935, Prague notified Warsaw: "a) an agreement on mutual assistance with Soviet Russia will be concluded in the near future; b) it is identical with the Franco-Soviet treaty and the Czechoslovak side deliberately acted in such a way that it would not affect Poland, i.e., that the treaty would not be directed against Poland in any way. The reservation about the entry into force of the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty of mutual assistance only after France provided assistance to Czechoslovakia was introduced by the Czechoslovak side, which feared that Poland, being an ally of France, might be at war with the USSR. On August 3, 1935, at a meeting of the executive committee of the Czech National Social and Diet Party, E. Benes announced that he had rejected the Soviet proposal for guarantees in case of Poland's attack on Czechoslovakia<sup>441</sup>. But neither these reports nor France's attempts to mediate between its allies changed the position of the Polish leadership. In the second half of 1935, Polish-Czech relations cooled even more: in May, the Czechoslovak ambassador in Warsaw, and in October the Polish ambassador in Prague, went on "vacation". The growth of interethnic problems in Czechoslovakia was perceived by the Polish leadership as a sign of its weakness. It is clear that Germany tried to convince Poland in every possible way that, having concluded an agreement with the USSR, Czechoslovakia became its vassal and a hotbed of communism. Under these conditions, on November 13, 1935, Polish diplomats in Prague received the task of collecting anti-Czech materials.

During the Wehrmacht's occupation of the Rhine demilitarized zone, Poland and Czechoslovakia were ready to support France, but the passive position of Paris made its Eastern European allies think about the future. The Polish leadership decided to continue maneuvering between the great powers, and the Czechoslovak leadership decided to focus on France. For its part, Paris tried to force Beck's resignation from the post of foreign minister and encourage Warsaw to expand cooperation with Moscow and Prague. However, none of these goals was achieved, and all attempts by Czechoslovakia through the mediation of France to achieve rapprochement with Poland ran into a wall of silence. The only thing that France managed to achieve was the return of the ambassadors of the parties from the "holidays". In mutual relations, Prague and Warsaw were guided by completely different interests.

Czechoslovakia was only interested in normal and good neighborly relations with Poland, while Warsaw wanted to get Teszyn, achieve the independence of Slovakia and the transfer of Transcarpathia to Hungary. It is clear that the interests of the parties were incompatible. As French influence declined in Eastern Europe, German influence grew. In the autumn of 1936, Prague probed Berlin for an anti-Comintern agreement. For its part, Warsaw in December 1937 declared to France that Czechoslovakia was a springboard for communist activity against Poland, and refused French mediation.

#### **On opposite sides of the barricades**



Under these conditions, Germany believed that the capture of Czechoslovakia would lead to the fact that Poland would remain neutral in the event of a German-French clash. Naturally, Berlin did its best to use Warsaw's anti-Czechoslovak complex. Beck, who arrived on a visit to Berlin on January 14, 1938, agreed with the plans to eliminate Czechoslovakia, and on February 16 he was notified that after Austria, the turn of Czechoslovakia would come. In February, the head of Hungary, M. Horthy, arrived in Warsaw on a visit, which was a Polish-Hungarian anti-Czechoslovak demonstration. It is clear that Poland was not going to look indifferently at the development of events, therefore, when Goering arrived in Warsaw on February 23, Beck asked him to coordinate further steps with Poland regarding Prague. Knowing about Germany's preparations for the solution of the Czechoslovak question, Poland gave its diplomats in Prague the task of establishing contacts with the Sudeten Germans and intensifying the activities of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia. That is, from February 1938, it was about creating a single German-Polish-Hungarian anti-Czechoslovak front. The Polish leadership believed that as a result of the collapse of Czechoslovakia, it would be able to increase its influence on Slovakia. In March, Warsaw demanded that Prague cease communist activities directed against Poland. On March 26, the Union of Poles was created in Teszyn, the purpose of which was to achieve the same position for the Poles in Czechoslovakia as for the Germans.

On April 29, 1938, Prague offered Warsaw to normalize economic relations, but Poland refused. On May 4, Czechoslovakia notified Poland that the new legislation on national minorities would also apply to the Polish population. For its part, the Polish leadership took an evasive position and began to maneuver between Germany and England and France. On May 12, the USSR declared its readiness to support Czechoslovakia, subject to the passage of the Red Army through Poland or Romania, which, naturally, declared their negative attitude towards this scenario. With regard to Germany, Poland took a rather benevolent position, declaring that in the event of a Franco-German clash, it would remain neutral and would not comply with the Franco-Polish treaty, since it only provided for defense against Germany, and not an attack on it. In addition, Poland categorically refused to support Czechoslovakia and even more so the Soviet Union. At the same time, Prague again tried to establish a dialogue with Warsaw, informing it on May 25 of the restriction of the activities of the communist movement. On May 22 and 27, in response to a French inquiry about Poland's position in the event of a German attack on Czechoslovakia, Warsaw stated that it would not interfere. If Prague is supported by London and Paris, then Warsaw will first of all analyze the

situation, since it did not undertake to intervene in the Franco-German war if France was its initiator. However, under no circumstances will Poland allow the Red Army or the Soviet Air Force to pass through its territory to provide assistance to Czechoslovakia. Warsaw believed that the problem of the Polish minority "should be resolved simultaneously and in full analogy with the resolution of the question of the Germans." In addition, the Polish side reproached France for interfering in the Polish-Lithuanian conflict, the Polish leadership decided that if Czechoslovakia was extradited to Germany, then Poland would demand the transfer of Teschin to her, and if a European war broke out, then Poland would distance itself from Germany.

<sup>442</sup>. However, at the end of May

On June 5, the USSR asked France about its reaction in the event of a Soviet strike on Poland, if it attacked Czechoslovakia, but no clear answer was received from Paris. In an effort to secure its foreign trade, which has now refocused mainly on Polish railways, Prague offered Warsaw zloty 5 billion in early June as a loan for the purchase of raw materials and war materials. However, the Polish leadership considered that territorial acquisitions were preferable, and the Polish press intensified the anti-Czech campaign. In July, Poland stepped up pressure on Czechoslovakia, demanding that the activities of the Comintern not be allowed on its territory, which forced Prague to justify itself. At the same time, Poland tried to convince England that without Warsaw to solve

The Czechoslovak question would not succeed, and through the mission Rensimena brought her demands to the attention

of Prague. As the position of England and France towards Czechoslovakia became clearer, Polish-German cooperation gained momentum. On August 11, Poland notified Germany that it would not allow the Red Army to pass through its territory, and also influenced Romania, but insisted on creating a common Polish-Hungarian border<sup>443</sup>. On August 24, the opinion of the Polish leadership was brought to the attention of Berlin, according to which Transcarpathia and Slovakia were to be transferred to Hungary, Teschin to Poland, and everything else to Germany. Such a position of Warsaw made an impression on England, which in September began to more often declare the need to resolve the Teszyn issue. Behind this, one could easily guess the desire of London to tear Warsaw away from Berlin. In turn, this British position intensified the Polish pressure on Prague. Already on September 15, Warsaw decided to demand from England

the spread of the plebiscite on Teszyn. Thus, Poland supported the position of Germany in the negotiations between Hitler and Chamberlain.

On September 11, England declared that in the event of war, she and France would support Czechoslovakia, but if Germany did not allow war, then she would get everything she wanted. For his part, Hitler, speaking on September 12 at the party congress in Nuremberg, declared that he wanted to live in peace with England, France and Poland, but would be forced to support the Sudeten Germans if their oppression did not stop. On September 13-14, the OFSN tried to seize power in the border areas. In response, Prague introduced martial law there, and the speeches of the OFSN were suppressed. During the riots, 11 Germans and 16 Czechs were killed<sup>444</sup> and 14 Germans and 61 Czechs were wounded. Against the backdrop of these events, on September 13, Chamberlain offered Hitler a meeting and arrived at Berchtesgaden on September 15. During the negotiations, Hitler demanded the annexation of the border regions of the Czech Republic. On September 17, the formation of the "Volunteer Corps of the Sudeten Germans" was announced, which organized 140 incidents on the border with Czechoslovakia, during which 95 Czechs were killed, 2.6 thousand people were captured on Czechoslovak territory and taken to Germany, the losses of the corps amounted to 49 people<sup>445</sup>. On September 19, England and France demanded that Czechoslovakia transfer to Germany areas with more than 50% of the German population. For its part,

London promised to provide Prague with international guarantees on the condition that it renounce existing treaties with France and the USSR<sup>446</sup>. On September 20, Czechoslovakia agreed to the Anglo-French demands, but proposed that they be formalized by arbitration on the basis of the German-Czechoslovak treaty of 1925. Czech question... Our pressure on Bucharest had the desired effect. The maneuvers carried out in Volhynia were understood by Moscow as a warning. Poland considers Soviet interference in European affairs unacceptable." The parties agreed on their positions regarding the division of Czechoslovakia. In addition, Warsaw hinted at the desirability of concluding German-Polish agreements on Danzig, on the border, and on extending the declaration of January 26, 1934.<sup>448</sup> On the night of September 21, the Volunteer Corps captured the city of Asch, and the SS and SA detachments captured Eger. At 19.00 on September 21, Poland demanded that Czechoslovakia hand over Teshin to her. The haste of Warsaw was explained by the desire not to be aloof from the possible rapprochement of England, France, Germany and Italy, as well as the unwillingness to ask Teshin from Germany. In the Polish demands, no deadline was indicated for Vylo, so as not to irritate the West and Germany. In addition, Polish diplomats in Paris and London insisted on an equal approach to solving the Sudeten and Teshin problems.

Having received a Polish ultimatum, Prague tried to put pressure on Warsaw with the help of Moscow, which it asked for support <sup>449</sup>. At the same time, on the

evening of September 22, Czechoslovakia notified Poland of its agreement to hand over Teszyn to it. At about 4 am on September 23, the Soviet side drew the attention of the Polish representative in Moscow to the fact that in the event of an invasion of Polish troops into Czechoslovakia, the USSR would denounce the non-aggression pact of 1932. that "measures taken in connection with the defense of the Polish state depend solely on the government of the Polish Republic, which is not obliged to give explanations to anyone"<sup>451</sup>. Basically, it was advice to mind your own business. Polish propaganda continued to reproach Czechoslovakia for having become a Comintern foothold, and that the current crisis was the result not of German aggression, but of Czechoslovak weakness. Pilsudski's words were widely popularized that "the artificially and ugly Czechoslovak Republic, created by the Czech Republic, not only is not the basis of the European balance, on the contrary, is its weak link"<sup>452</sup>. On September 22, Chamberlain arrived in Godesberg to Hitler and offered to transfer

territories with 65% of the German population to Germany with the right to choose citizenship and compensation for property. Hitler demanded that these territories be transferred to Germany by September 28 and that the claims of Poland and Hungary be satisfied. On September 24-26, England and France negotiated a possible reaction to German demands. Meanwhile, Prague tried to start negotiations with Poland, but the parties acted with an eye on the great powers, and everything stopped at the sounding stage. In Poland, a Volunteer Corps was created to liberate Teszyn, and on the night of September 26, a Polish detachment raided the city of Fristadt. Naturally, the Polish press choked with protests against the incidents organized by the Czechoslovaks. At the request of Berlin on September 27

Warsaw did not answer about Poland's position in the event of war, but stated that "it will never cooperate with the Soviet Union, since it interferes in European affairs. This is the inexorable line of Polish politics. Comparison of German and Polish claims to Czechoslovak territories

September 28 showed that both sides claim the city of Bohumin. As a result, Germany announced its consent to cede the city to the Poles, but the final decision was to be made by the conference in Munich.

On September 27, Hitler offered England to guarantee the independence of the territory that would remain with Czechoslovakia after the transfer of the border regions to Germany. On September 28, England proposed to hold an international conference. Poland hoped that she would finally be invited to Munich, but England rejected this idea, citing the fact that Warsaw and Prague had already agreed on everything. Upon learning of this, Warsaw on September 29 demanded from Prague an answer to the note dated September 27, in which it demanded that Teshin be handed over to her and a plebiscite be held in the areas inhabited by Poles in Czechoslovakia. Prague again responded in principle, but Warsaw's desire to solve all problems during the Munich Conference failed. In the meantime, on September 29-30, during the conference of England, France, Germany and Italy in Munich, an agreement was worked out on the Czechoslovak question, which satisfied all the claims of the Third Reich. It was decided to hand over to Germany the border regions of Czechoslovakia by 10 October. The right of the population of the transferred areas to opt was proclaimed, but not implemented. The proclaimed international guarantees were never formalized, since England evaded

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THIS . At the same time, on September 30, England and Germany signed a non-aggression agreement and consultations. In addition, England asked Germany and Italy to support the idea of giving France the opportunity to reach a truce in Spain. That is, in fact, it was about the recognition of Franco, although London and Paris had diplomatic relations with Madrid. It is clear that Hitler did not object. By signing the Munich Agreement, France violated the Franco-Czechoslovak Treaty of 21 January 1924 and the Treaty of Locarno of 16 October 1925. not to lose everything . " In addition, the right of Poland and Hungary to a territorial settlement with Czechoslovakia was recognized.

For its part, Czechoslovakia offered Poland to agree on the transfer of territories within two months. Then, on September 30, Warsaw sent an ultimatum to Prague demanding that the Polish conditions be accepted by 12:00 on October 1 and fulfilled within 10 days, while Teshyn was to be occupied by Polish troops in the morning of October 2. Although England and France protested to Poland, they put pressure on Prague, inclining her to an agreement. For its part, Germany responded to a Polish inquiry about its position in the event of a Polish-Czechoslovak war on October 1 that it would take a sympathetic position, and if the USSR intervened, then Germany's position would be "much further than sympathetic"<sup>456</sup> . Or, as the Polish ambassador in Berlin reported to Warsaw, according to Goering, "in the event of complications with Russia, Poland can count on the most effective help from Germany"<sup>457</sup> . On October 1, Czechoslovak troops began to withdraw from the border and the Teshyn area (862 sq. km, 80 thousand Poles and 120 thousand Czechoslovaks) was transferred to Poland, which thereby increased the production capacity of heavy industry by almost 50% <sup>458</sup> . In the heat of success, Warsaw on November 29 demanded that a number of territories in the Carpathians (223.1 sq. km) be transferred to it, which prompted the Slovak separatists to move closer to Germany. Understandably, the Polish press proclaimed a great diplomatic victory for Minister Beck and extolled the Munich Agreement as the basis of peace for Europe. However, as a result of all these events, Poland lost a natural ally against Germany and weakened its southern flank, and an attempt to gain the territory of Moravian Ostrava and Vitkovice ran into a categorical refusal by Germany. In recent years, works

have appeared in Russian historiography whose authors questioned the readiness and desire of the Soviet leadership to fulfill the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty of 1935 and come to the aid of Czechoslovakia. So, D.G. Najafov believes that "both Western countries and the Soviet Union showed indecision"<sup>459</sup> . According to S.Z. Chance, the goal of the Soviet leadership in the summer of 1938 "was to convince the world, on the one hand, of the readiness of the USSR to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia, and on the other hand, of the impossibility of providing this assistance due to various reasons, mainly allegedly beyond the control of the Soviet Union"<sup>460</sup> . Among such reasons, he relates, in particular, the problem of the passage of the Red Army to the aid of Czechoslovakia through the territory of Poland or Romania<sup>461</sup> . Thus, the long-known theses of the apologists for the "appeasement" of Germany at the expense of its eastern neighbors are now voiced in Russian historiography.

Before expressing one's own opinion, one should consider the position of the USSR during the Czechoslovak crisis. The Soviet leadership was well aware that the solution to this problem depended on the position of England and France, which, as already noted, were not at all pleased with the Soviet intervention in the civil war in Spain. As you know, the main foreign policy goal of the Anglo-French policy was the desire to direct German expansion to the East, and it was this idea that became decisive for the Western powers. It would seem that open German expansion in Europe affected the interests of London and Paris, but their leadership believed that German concessions would pay off and the threat to Western countries would be eliminated as a result of a German-Soviet clash. Having staked on an agreement with Germany, England and France in every possible way evaded any Soviet proposals that could lead to a deterioration in their relations with Berlin.

This is confirmed by the chronology of Soviet diplomatic steps towards England and France in the spring and summer of 1938. On March 14, 1938, the USSR offered France to hold consultations on the situation that had developed after the Anschluss of Austria, but was refused. On March 15-16, the Soviet side told the Czechoslovak envoy and representatives of the foreign press that it would "fulfill its allied obligations"<sup>462</sup>. As already noted, on March 17, the USSR declared that it was ready to "participate in collective actions that would be decided jointly with it and which would have the goal of stopping the further development of aggression" and proposed holding a conference of interested countries<sup>463</sup>. On March 24, there was a reply from London that such a conference was "impossible at the present time"<sup>464</sup>. On April 23, the Czechoslovak envoy in Moscow reported to Prague about a meeting in the Kremlin, at which it was decided that "the USSR, if asked, is ready, together with France," to help Czechoslovakia<sup>465</sup>. Recall that the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty came into force only if France provided assistance to Czechoslovakia. April 26 Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR M.I. Kalinin said that Moscow could help Prague without France<sup>466</sup>. On May 13, Moscow offered Paris to begin military negotiations, but France evaded this. In mid-May, Stalin told the leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, K. Gottwald, to convey to Beneš, that the USSR would provide assistance even without France if Czechoslovakia fought and asked for help.

In any case, this was a completely clear and unambiguous position, in contrast, for example, to the position of France, whose Foreign Minister J. Bonnet openly declared to the

German ambassador on April 30 that "any agreement is better than a world war, in which case the whole Europe, both the victor and the vanquished, will fall victim to world communism". In addition, it should not be forgotten that back in March 1938, a Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement was reached on the supply of 60 Soviet SB bombers to Czechoslovakia, which were also already being produced by Czechoslovak aviation plants under license as the B-71469. Nevertheless, Prague, as you know, took a rather cautious position regarding military contacts with the USSR and at the end of April notified Paris that it would not conclude a military convention with the USSR before France did. When Germany told the USSR on August 22 that an attack on Czechoslovakia was possible only in the event of Czechoslovak provocations, the Soviet side replied that Germany would be the aggressor in any case and the USSR would help its ally France and Czechoslovakia and was widely reported in the press. At the end of August, the USSR declared to Britain that if the Western countries came out in defense of Czechoslovakia, Moscow would fulfill its allied obligations. However,<sup>of</sup>. This answer was brought to the attention of England, London tried with all its might to avoid war, and on August 30 it

was decided that, under certain conditions, Chamberlain would pay a visit to Germany, and England would exert a deterrent influence on France even in the event of a German attack on Czechoslovakia. On the whole, this British position was approved by both Paris and Washington. On September 2, France for the first time officially asked the USSR about its position in the event of an attack on Czechoslovakia. Moscow replied that it would fulfill its allied obligations and offered to start negotiations with the general staffs of France and Czechoslovakia, convene an Anglo-French-Soviet conference and discuss the Czechoslovak question in the League of Nations<sup>472</sup>. All this was reported to England and Czechoslovakia, but the British press continued to assert that nothing was known about Soviet intentions. It is clear that this Soviet proposal to discuss the Czechoslovak question in the League of Nations displeased England, since this would mean involving the Soviet Union and other countries in its discussion, which, in the opinion of London, should be avoided in every possible way. No one then doubted that the Council of the League of Nations would decide the issue in favor of the victim of aggression, and this would lead to the fact that its members would be obliged to provide assistance to Czechoslovakia, including letting the Red Army through

its territory (Poland and Romania). That is why Britain and France tried to prevent the discussion of this question in Geneva.

In the course of the Czechoslovak crisis, England in every possible way fanned rumors about difficulties in the USSR and the weakness of the Red Army. On September 23, England asked the USSR about its position in the event of war, but, having received an answer about its readiness to fulfill the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty, it lost interest in Moscow's opinion<sup>473</sup>. The same evasive position was taken by France, which, being formally an ally of the USSR, in response to its proposals to discuss possible military measures to implement the mutual assistance treaty, reproached Moscow for wanting to kindle a war in Europe. On September 11, the Soviet side again reminded France of its proposals of September 2, but the French Foreign Minister Bonnet, referring to the British position, evaded the Soviet proposals. Moreover, he withheld all these proposals from his cabinet colleagues. It is clear that when Romania on September 6, 11 and 15 declared to France that it was ready to turn a blind eye to the passage of Soviet aircraft through its airspace, Paris. For his part, the French commander-in-chief, General M. Gamelin<sup>12 or 13</sup> 475, he simply said nothing to the Soviet military attache about the plans for an offensive in Germany, in response to which his interlocutor stated that if Poland supported Germany, the Red Army would defeat it<sup>476</sup>. On September 28, France asked the USSR not to attack Poland without warning Paris in advance.

Prague behaved just as cautiously towards the Soviet Union, which only on September 19, after receiving Anglo-French demands, for the first time officially asked Moscow about its position in the event of a German attack. Already on the evening of September 20, an answer was received from Moscow that the USSR would fulfill its obligations. On the morning of September 21, the USSR published its responses to the request of France of September 2 and Czechoslovakia of September 19. On September 21 and 23, Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs M.M. Litvinov during the Assembly of the League of Nations declared his readiness to provide assistance to Czechoslovakia<sup>478</sup>. When Prague turned to Moscow with a request to influence Poland, the USSR on September 23 told Poland that its actions against Czechoslovakia would lead to the denunciation of the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact. Nevertheless, even at the end of September, the Czechoslovak government was unwilling to ask the Soviet Union for help. On September 29, Gamelin offered Prague mediation to explore the issue of Soviet military assistance, but she refused, because she feared that in the event of Soviet intervention, England and France would support Germany. As if

they were supporting Prague all this time! Thus, in 6 months the USSR officially declared its readiness to support Czechoslovakia 10 times. In addition, 4 times this was confidentially reported to France, 4 times to Czechoslovakia and 3 times to England. The Soviet side three times offered to hold talks between the general staffs of France and once of England, but no answer was received<sup>480</sup>. It was only on September 29 that Britain informed the Soviet Union that he had not been invited to the conference in Munich because Hitler and Mussolini would have refused to sit next to a Soviet representative. Naturally, on October 2 and 4, 1938, Moscow declared that "neither France nor England consulted with the USSR, but only informed the USSR government about the fait accompli. The Soviet government had and has nothing to do with the conference in Munich and its decisions..."<sup>482</sup>. The facts cited show that the Soviet Union

was by no means passive and did not hide behind some imaginary reasons. First of all, the desire of the Soviet leadership to act within the framework of the concept of collective security is quite obvious, which met not only Soviet interests, but also those international norms that were declared at that time by the leading world powers. Therefore, it is not clear how one can lay the responsibility for the surrender of the Western powers in Munich on the Soviet Union, whose allies (France and Czechoslovakia) simply refused to discuss with it the problem of implementing allied obligations. Various excuses were invented for this, ranging from doubts about the ability of the Red Army to carry out large-scale operations outside its borders to the desire to prevent the outbreak of a war that would result in the victory of Bolshevism in Europe. However, all these excuses could not hide the fact that the Western powers agreed in advance to hand over Czechoslovakia to Germany, and all their actions in April-September 1938 served only to cover up this goal. As events unfolded, the Soviet leadership only became convinced that the Western powers would not contain Germany. At the end of September 1938, the situation escalated and there was a threat that Czechoslovakia would not capitulate, but would fight. Therefore, the countries concerned carried out the following military measures.

Blackmailing the Western states with the threat of war, Germany in September 1938 concentrated troops near the borders of Czechoslovakia. On September 16-18, the concentration of five armies began to implement the Grun plan. In Upper Silesia was deployed

2nd Army (commander - Colonel General G. von Runstedt) as part of the 2nd and 8th Army corps (8th, 12th, 28th, 30th, 32nd infantry, 3rd tank, 3rd light infantry and 16th, 30th, 70th, 72nd landwehr divisions). To the west, formations of a separate 4th army corps (4th and 14th infantry divisions). The troops of the 8th Army concentrated in Saxony (commander - Colonel General F. von Bock) as part of the 3rd Army Corps (3rd, 18th and 23rd Infantry Divisions). in Bavaria was deployed the 10th Army (commander - General V. von Reichenau) as part of the 13th Army, 14th motorized and 16th tank corps (10th, 17th, 24th infantry, 2nd, 13th, 20th motorized, 1st tank and 1st light infantry divisions). In Southern Bavaria and Upper Austria concentrated formations of the 12th army (commander - General W. von Leeb) as part of the 5th and 7th army corps (5th, 7th,

9th, 25th, 27th, 45th infantry, 1st mountain infantry divisions). In addition, this army it was supposed to transfer two more infantry divisions. 14th Army deployed in Lower Austria (commander - General V. List) as part of the 17th, 18th army and 19th tank corps (44th infantry, 29th motorized, 2nd, 3rd mountain infantry, 2nd tank, 4th light infantry divisions).

To cover the border with France, the German command deployed three armies. border with Belgium was covered by the 5th Army (commander - General G. Lindeman) as part of the 6th Army Corps (26th Infantry, 41st, 57th, 92nd Landwehr Divisions). Between the Moselle and the Rhine, the troops of the 1st army (commander - General L. Beck) as part of the 12th Army Corps (33rd, 34th, 36th Infantry, 11th I, 26th, 84th Landwehr divisions). Troops of the 7th Army (commander - General H. von Lötzen) were concentrated along the banks of the Rhine as part of the administration of the 5th Army Corps (35th Infantry, 14th, 45th, 97th Landwehr Division). If we take into account that the landwehr divisions were lightly armed and provided with a minimum of vehicles connections with senior soldiers ages, then in reality there were only 5 active divisions on the western border. On the eastern borders East Prussia deployed the troops of the 3rd Army (commander - ge

Neral K. Kühler) as part of the 1st Army Corps (1st, 11th, 21st Infantry, 61st Reserve, two landwehr divisions and the 1st cavalry brigade). Troops of the 4th Army concentrated in Pomerania (commander - Colonel General K. von Hammerstein-Equord) as part of the 1st and 99th Land-True Divisions<sup>483</sup>.

**Table 16 Composition of the German Air Force for August-September 1938<sup>484</sup>**

<i>aircraft type</i>	<i>August 1</i>	<i>September 19</i>	<i>September 26</i>
Bombers	1,157(582)	1,235(1,019)	1,128(1,040)
Dive bombers	207(159)	247(227)	226(220)
Attack aircraft		173(1)	195(164) 195(182)
Fighters	643 (453)	810 (717)	773 (738)
Long range scouts		197(136)	222(177) 222(206)
Close scouts	285(164)	289(238)	291 (270)
Marine		185(151)	- 164(149)
Transport	81(23)	317(293)	308(299)
Total		2 928 (1669)	3 315 (2 835) 3 307 (3 104)

At this time, the Wehrmacht had limited stocks of weapons. So, on April 1, 1938 in ground forces of Germany, there were 15,213 guns and mortars and 1983 tanks (of which 1468 T-1,443 T-II, 42 T-III and 30-T-IV)<sup>485</sup>. The Wehrmacht had 51 divisions and 1 cavalry brigade, and even in the summer of 1938. 8 reserve divisions were created<sup>486</sup>. The size of the Air Force aircraft fleet is shown in Table 16, where the first figure gives an idea of the total number, and the figure in brackets - about the combat-ready aircraft. By August 1, the Luftwaffe had 1,433 fully and 1,145 partially combat-ready crews, and by 26 September, these figures increased to 2,444 and 1,064, respectively. The total mobilization in the Wehrmacht did not was carried out

since it was decided to use only personnel formations for actions against Czechoslovakia peacetime, replenished with reservists to wartime states. All these activities conducted under the guise of "training camps". According to the plan of operation "Grun", it was supposed to inflict main force attack

2nd and 14th armies in order to cut Czechoslovakia and surround the main forces of the Czechoslovak army in

Czech Republic.

On September 23, mobilization began in Czechoslovakia, and by September 29, the Czechoslovak army was deployed along the border. In Northern, Western and Southern Bohemia there were troops of the 1st Army consisting of

1st and 2nd Corps (2nd, 3rd, 5th, 17th, 18th Infantry Divisions, 1st, 3rd, 4th infantry groups). The troops of the 2nd Army were concentrated in North Moravia as part of the 4th Corps (7th, 8th Infantry Divisions). Along the southern border of Slovakia, units of the 3rd Army were deployed as part of the 7th Corps (10th, 11th, 3rd light infantry division, 3rd cavalry, 3rd motorized brigade). In South Moravia, the troops of the 4th Army were concentrated as part of the 3rd, 5th and

6th Corps (6th, 19th, 20th Infantry, 2nd, 4th Light

Infantry, 14th motorized divisions, 2nd, 4th cavalry, 2nd, 4th motorized brigades and 2nd infantry group). In addition, the 4th, 9th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 21st, 22nd, 1st Light Infantry Divisions, 1st Cavalry, 1st motorized brigade In the event of war, the troops, together with the mobilized border guards, relying on border fortifications, were supposed to repel the German invasion. In the event of a breakthrough of the defense, it was supposed to withdraw troops to Slovakia, delaying hostilities and waiting for the help of the allies. The armed forces of Czechoslovakia numbered almost 2 million people and were armed with 5,700 guns and mortars, 1,514 aircraft, 348 tanks, 70 tankettes and 75 armored vehicles. 8 fortresses, 725 heavy pillboxes and 8,774

light bunkers<sup>488</sup>.

On September 8-11, major maneuvers of the Polish army took place in Volyn, in which 5 infantry divisions, 1 improvised cavalry division, 1 motorized brigade and 1 light bomber brigade took part. Thus, Warsaw demonstrated its readiness to stop the Red Army if it tried to pass through Polish territory to help Czechoslovakia. Under the cover of these maneuvers, the Polish troops began to converge on Teszyn. On the border with Czechoslovakia, the Poles deployed a separate operational group "Shlensk" under the command of General V. Bortnovsky, consisting of

4th, 21st and 23rd Infantry Divisions, Wielkopolska

and 10th Motorized Cavalry Brigades. By October 1, 1938, this grouping consisted of 35,966 489 people, 270 guns, 103 tanks and tankettes, 9 armored vehicles and

103 aircraft On September 3, 300 thousand reservists were called up in France, on September 4 holidays in garrisons on the eastern border were canceled, on September 5 the Maginot Line was fully equipped with technical units. On the evening of September 22, 6 French divisions were advanced to the German border. On the night of September 24, another 600 thousand reservists were called up and 14 divisions were transferred to the border. By September 28, 1.5 million people were mobilized into the French troops, and 37 infantry divisions, 13 cavalry brigades and 29 tank regiments, with a total number of 896 thousand people, were deployed on the German border. In total, the French army had more than 1,275 tanks and 1,604 first-line combat aircraft. The armed forces of England had 20 divisions and 2 brigades (about 400,000 men), 375 tanks and 1,759 first-line aircraft<sup>490</sup>.

Military measures in connection with the Czechoslovak crisis began to be carried out in the Soviet Union from summer

1938 On June 26, 1938, the Soviet leadership decided to reorganize the military territorial structures of the Red Army and form 6 army groups in the Belorussian (BVO) and Kiev (KVO) military districts, according to the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0151 of July 26, 1938. The BVO was renamed into a special military district (BOVO), and the Vitebsk Army Group (AG) was formed within it (on the basis of the

4th Rifle Corps), which included troops located on the territory of the Vitebsk and Minsk regions, and the Bobruisk AG (based on the administration of the 5th Rifle Corps), which united troops on the territory of the Mogilev, Gomel and Polesye regions<sup>491</sup>. According to the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0152 of July 26, 1938, the KVO was renamed into a special military district (KOVO), and the Zhytomyr AG (on the basis of the 8th Rifle Corps) was formed in its composition, whose troops were stationed on the territory of Chernihiv, Kiev and Zhytomyr regions, Vinnitsa AG (based on the administration of the 17th rifle corps), which united troops on the territory of Vinnitsa and Kamenetz, Podolsk regions, Odessa AG (based on the administration of the 6th rifle corps), which included troops located in the Nikolaev region and the Moldavian ASSR, and the Cavalry AG as part of the 2nd and 4th cavalry corps. These departments were a camouflaged form of the usual army department<sup>492</sup>. In addition, on July 28, the People's Commissar of Defense

issued Order No. 0154 on the formation of the Orlovsky (OrVO) and Kalininsky (KaVO) military districts. The first was created in the territories of the Oryol, Kursk and Voronezh regions, and the second - in the Kalinin and Yaroslavl regions. The formation of district administrations, created on the basis of the 10th and 2nd rifle corps, was to be completed by September 1

1938 493 On August 6, the People's Commissar of Defense issued order No. 0038, according to which "junior command, commanding and enlisted personnel of engineer battalions of rifle corps (one JIBO, three BOVO, four KOVO) and engineer battalions of rifle divisions (four BOVO and ten KOVO), subject to dismissal this autumn, to be dismissed on 12/15/38. In addition, to call for special training camps of the specified units of non-military personnel according to the number of assigned staff, for a period of three months" 494. During the

September crisis, more serious measures were taken. On September 21, 1938, the Military Council of the KOVO received a directive from the People's Commissar of Defense K.E. Voroshilov about bringing to combat readiness and concentration of troops near the border with Poland in order to conduct "major exercises". In the area of Proskurov, the Vinnitsa army group (commander - commander P.S. Ivanov) should be concentrated as part of the 17th rifle corps (72nd, 96th and 97th rifle divisions), as well as the 23rd and 26th separate tank brigades, 25th tank corps (4th and 5th tank and 1st motorized rifle brigades), 4th cavalry corps (9th, 32nd and 34th cavalry divisions), three regiments of fighter and four bomber regiments. All preparations for action were ordered to be completed by 23 September.

Zhytomyr army group (commander - commander F.N. Remizov) - 8th and 15th rifle (7th, 44th, 45th, 46th, 60th, 81st and 87th rifle divisions), the 2nd cavalry (3rd, 5th and 14th cavalry divisions) corps - at that time was conducting exercises according to the plan of the district commander, in the area adjacent to the places of its permanent quartering. By the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense, she was ordered to complete these exercises by September 23-24 by concentrating all forces in the area of Novograd Volynsky, Shepetovka. In order to replenish the rifle divisions and two air bases, an order was given to call up assigned officers and rank and file at the rate of 8 thousand people per division, and to the air bases - until they are fully combat staffed.

On September 21, the 2nd Special Purpose Aviation Army (GAA) received an order from the General Staff to relocate its combat forces to the territory of KOBQ in the areas of Belaya Tserkov and Uman to participate in ongoing activities. On the same day, by a special directive of the People's Commissar of Defense, KOVO was entrusted with providing it with fuel and ammunition. Aviation GA was first created in February 1936, and according to the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 4/4/33935 dated May 11, 1938 and the decision of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR No. 88ss / s dated May 27, it was reorganized and two more were formed AND HE. The 1st AON was deployed in the areas of Monin, Ivanov, Kalinin, the 2nd AON - in the areas of Voronezh, Kursk, Orel, and the 3rd AON - in the areas of Rostov-on-Don, Novocheboksarsk. On August 31, the acting commander of the 1st AON y%B. Belyakov reported to Stalin that on August 28, 10 DB-3 aircraft made a non-stop flight along the route Monino-Sevastopol-Krasnodar-Monino (3119 km) in 12 hours and bombed at the training ground near Rostov-on-Don from a height of 8 and 7, 5 km. The length of the route, indicated in the report, corresponds to the flight from Moscow to Berlin and back.

to 497 Smolensk On the morning of September 22, the headquarters of the KOVO reported to the General Staff that at 4 o'clock in the morning the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense was brought to all troops, and they began to carry out their tasks. The operational group of the district headquarters, headed by the commander of the troops, commander of the 1st rank S.K. Timoshenko relocated from Kyiv to Proskurov, from where communication was organized with all subordinate troops and with Moscow. To maintain a more reliable connection with the General Staff, special equipment was urgently sent from Moscow to Proskurov with personnel serving

On September 23, the Military Council of the BOVO received a directive from the People's Commissar of Defense to put the troops of the Vitebsk Army Group (commanded by Divisional Commander F.I. Kuznetsov) into combat readiness and advance to the state border as part of the 4th Rifle Corps (5th and 50th Rifle Divisions and the 18th tank brigade), the Lepel group of troops (27th rifle, 24th cavalry division and 16th tank brigade) and the Bobruisk army group (commander - brigade commander V.I. Chuikov), which included the 16th rifle (2nd, 13th, 100th rifle divisions, 21st tank brigade) and 3rd cavalry (4th, 7th and 36th cavalry divisions) corps. At 10.55 on September 24, the headquarters of the BOVO reported to the General Staff on the beginning of the fulfillment of the tasks assigned to it.

On September 23, KalVO also received a directive from the People's Commissar of Defense to advance the 67th Infantry Division to the state border. To cover and support the troops, it was ordered to attract fighter and bomber aircraft, and fighter and high-speed bomber aircraft were relocated to forward airfields at the direction of the command of the districts, and heavy bomber aircraft were to operate from areas of permanent deployment, using airfields located closer to the state border for temporary landing. Aviation flights were ordered to begin on the morning of September 24th.



In addition, since September 21, in the western districts, the rear units of aviation, the entire air defense system and the troops of fortified areas were put on alert. By order of the General Staff, round-the-clock duty was established at the headquarters and at the communication centers of KalVO, BOVO and KOVO in case of immediate receipt and report to the command of further orders and instructions. In total, the following were put on alert: one tank corps, 30 rifle and 10 cavalry divisions, 3 separate tank brigades, 7 fortified areas, 12 aviation brigades, as well as warehouses, bases and other units of combat and logistics support. In addition, in J1BO, KalVO, BOVO, KOVO, HVO and MVO, the entire air defense system was prepared for action - two corps, one division, 2 brigades and 16 air defense regiments, 4 anti-aircraft artillery brigades and 15 anti-aircraft artillery regiments, and also a number of separate anti-aircraft artillery divisions. On the morning of September 24, the formations of the border districts were raised on combat alert for exercises. Along with measures aimed at increasing the combat

readiness of troops, active political work was carried out in units and formations of the western border districts: conversations were held about the situation in Czechoslovakia, about the traditions of Soviet-Czechoslovak friendship, and the aggressive essence of German fascism was revealed. The troops and headquarters studied the experience of the combat operations of the Soviet troops near Lake Khasan. Everything was aimed at ensuring that the troops, brought to full combat readiness and deployed directly at the state border, could at any moment, at the signal of the Soviet government, begin to act.

All these measures have borne fruit. During the exercises, the morale of the troops increased significantly, and the number of negative sentiments sharply decreased. German and Polish fascists evoked general hatred. As the Red Army soldiers of military unit 5077 Tarasov and Meshchanov stated: "It would be more likely to oppose fascist Poland, let only the order of our party and Great Stalin follow, we will wipe the fascist bastards from the face of the earth." According to a soldier of the same unit, Shcherbakov, "our Far Eastern comrades taught the Japanese samurai a lesson how we want to show the same heroism and courage in the West." Soldier of military unit 5711 Tolkachev expressed similar thoughts: "The Czechoslovak people do not want war, but they are threatened by German fascism, together with the Anglo-French bourgeoisie, we can show how to fight, just as our Far Eastern comrades showed at Lake Khasan". Speaking at the rally, the commander of the 5th Cavalry Division Tugay said: "We are ready, we are waiting for your (Stalin's) orders to smash the fascist bastard, and if during the Civil War we didn't have to take Warsaw through the betrayal of the enemies of the people, 498

now we'll take it." On

September 25, 1938, the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR telegraphed to Paris for transmission to the French

military authorities:

***"OUR COMMAND HAS TAKEN THE FOLLOWING PREVENTIVE MEASURES SO far: 1. 30 RIFLE DIVISIONS HAVE BEEN MOVED TO THE AREAS ADJACENT TO THE WESTERN BORDER. THE SAME IS DONE WITH RESPECT TO THE CAVALRY DIVISIONS.***

***2. PARTS HAVE BEEN REPLENISHED ACCORDINGLY.***

***3. AS TO OUR TECHNICAL TROOPS - AVIATION AND TANK UNITS - THEY ARE WITH US IN FULL READINESS \*\*\*.***

On September 28, this information was transferred to the French military attaché in the USSR Palas. About it just like many other events, was immediately reported to the Czechoslovak government <sup>500.</sup>

On the eve of the Munich Conference, the Soviet Union took new measures to increase the mobilization and operational readiness of its armed forces. On September 27, the General Staff warned the military councils of all districts, except for the Far Eastern and Trans-Baikal ones, about the immediate preparation of documentation for the drafting of assigned staff of people, horses and vehicles from the national economy. On September 28, J1BO, BOVO, KOVO, HVO, OrVO, KalVO, MVO, PriVO, UrVO, SKVO and ZakVO received a telegram from the Chief of the General Staff with the order "Red Army soldiers and junior commanders who have served the established terms of service in the ranks of the Red Army, until the order from the ranks of the army is not dismiss"<sup>501</sup>. On September 29, the Military Councils of the KOVO, BOVO, J1BO and KalVO received a directive to put on combat readiness an additional 17 rifle divisions, directorates

2 tank corps and corps units, 22 tank and 3 motorized rifle brigades, 34 air bases. To replenish them, mobilization was carried out the required number of assigned staff for 20-day fees<sup>502</sup>.

On the same day, the Military Councils of the KhVO, OrVO, SKVO, PriVO and UrVO received telegrams with instructions to call up 250-275 people of assigned command and political staff to all divisions they had within two days. These instructions then extended to the Moscow Military District. In addition to the troops of the western border military districts advanced to the state border, another 30 rifle and 6 cavalry divisions, 2 tank corps, 15 separate tank brigades, 34 air bases were affected by mobilization measures. 328.7 thousand people were called up to the Red Army from the reserve, the dismissal from the army of sergeants and privates who had served the established terms was delayed. It was especially strengthened by the personnel, transport and combat aviation of the KOVO, in which 108,528 people showed up for training camps by October 25, 1938. In total, the Red Army had 18,664 tanks and 2,741 armored vehicles, of which 3,609 tanks and 294 armored vehicles were in the BOVO troops, and 3,644 tanks and 249 armored vehicles were in the KOVO troops.

On September 28, the People's Commissar of Defense reported to the Soviet government about his readiness to send to Czechoslovakia the 16th (56th and 54th medium bomber regiments) and 58th (21st, 31st fighter aviation regiments) aviation brigades of the BOVO, 10th (33rd medium-bomber air regiment) and the 69th (17th, 43rd fighter air regiments) aviation brigades of the KOVO and the 60th medium-bomber air regiment of the KhVO, consisting of 548 combat aircraft. In total, the aviation grouping of KalVO, BOVO and KOVO, taking into account the 2nd GA, by October 1, 1938, totaled 2,690 aircraft out of 7,022 available in the combat units of the Red Army.

Air Force. Thus, the Soviet government not only repeatedly clearly stated its position in the conditions of the Czechoslovak crisis, but also took appropriate military measures to prepare for rendering assistance to Czechoslovakia. In view of the foregoing, the opinion of S.Z. The case that these military preparations cannot serve as evidence of the "Kremlin's desire to help" its ally seems completely unfounded. Formulating such an opinion, S.Z. Chance would have to determine exactly which actions of the USSR would be such a confirmation. S.Z. himself Sluch believes that "without a preliminary solution to a whole range of cardinal issues related to the passage of troops through the territory of neighboring states (Poland and Romania), or, at least, permission to use their airspace to provide air support to Czechoslovakia, without coordinating the actions of the general staffs and etc., these steps of the Soviet leadership remained only demonstrative actions". Such a statement looks at least

Weird.

As has already been shown, it was France and Czechoslovakia who refused military negotiations, while Britain and France blocked Soviet proposals to discuss the problem of collective support for Czechoslovakia through the League of Nations. Why is the responsibility for all this placed on the Soviet leadership? If you take the point of view of S.Z. The case, then Moscow could not take any military measures at all, since all these "cardinal issues" were not resolved. Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership considered itself obliged to prepare for the outbreak of war in Europe, which, despite any doubts, still serves as decisive **evidence** of its readiness to support its allies in the war with Germany. At the same time, the Kremlin had no intention of rushing headlong into war without taking into account the general political situation. It is one thing to participate in a war between two blocs of European states, and quite another to fight Germany, which enjoys at least the neutrality of England and France. The USSR already had such experience from the events in Spain, and Moscow was clearly in no hurry to repeat it on a pan-European scale. Unfortunately, the documents of the Soviet military command on the problems of the Czechoslovak crisis

are still unknown. Only a document dated March 24, 1938 is available, according to which

**"The emerging political situation in Europe and the Far East, as the most likely opponents, puts forward the fascist bloc - Germany, Italy, supported by Japan and Poland. These states set themselves the goal of bringing political relations with the USSR to the point of an armed clash. However, at this time Germany and Italy have not yet secured positions of free hands against the USSR, and Japan is waging a tense war with China ... Poland is in the orbit of the fascist bloc, trying to maintain the apparent independence of its foreign policy. The highly vacillating policy of Britain and France allows the fascist bloc in Europe to find an agreement in the event of war with the Soviet Union in order to spend most of its forces against the USSR. The same policy of England and France determines the policy and nature of the martial law in Finland, Estonia and Latvia, Rumania, as well as in Turkey and Bulgaria. It is possible that the listed states will remain neutral, waiting for the result**

**the first clashes, but their direct participation in the war on the side of the fascist bloc is not excluded ... Thus, the Soviet Union needs to be ready for a fight on two fronts: in the West against Germany and Poland and partly against Italy with the possible accession of the limitrophes and in the East against Japan .**

Thus, in Moscow they understood perfectly well that it was precisely on the position of England and France that the development of the military-political situation in Europe.

In any case, in the autumn of 1938, France, Czechoslovakia and the USSR had armed forces capable of defeating Germany. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the crisis was predominantly political in nature and the firm position of England and France was quite enough to stop Germany. If we talk about the purely military side of the problem, then it should be remembered that the threat of war on the part of Germany was an obvious bluff. As General Jodl admitted after the war, "There was nothing to think that with 5 combat and 7 reserve divisions we could hold the western fortifications, which were just a vast construction site, with a hundred French divisions against us. From a military point of view, this was impossible .

According to General V. Keitel, "we were terribly glad that it did not come to military operations, because throughout the entire preparatory period we always believed that the means at our disposal for attacking the border fortifications of Czechoslovakia were insufficient. From a purely military point of view, we were not strong enough to launch an offensive connected with the breakthrough of the border fortifications: we did not have the technical means for such an offensive . The general believed that "if Daladier and Chamberlain had declared in Munich: "We will march", we would by no means have taken military measures", since "by this time we had not made any strategic or tactical preparations"<sup>511</sup> . The entry of German troops into Czechoslovakia in October 1938 showed that they were completely unprepared for serious battles. In the Karlovy Vary area, Hitler and General Reichenau were able to inspect the Czech fortifications. Convinced of their excellent quality, Hitler rightly declared that "the strength of concrete does not play any role if willpower is weak"<sup>512</sup> .

### **Choice of strategy**

As soon as the implementation of the Munich Agreement was completed, on October 24, 1938, Germany proposed to Poland to settle the problems of Danzig and the "Polish Corridor" on the basis of cooperation within the framework of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Warsaw was asked to agree to the inclusion of Danzig in the Third Reich, to allow the construction of extraterritorial highways and railways through the "Polish corridor" and to join the Anti-Comintern Pact. For its part, Germany was ready to extend the agreement of 1934 for 25 years and guarantee the existing German-Polish borders. Thus, Germany would solve for itself the task of rear cover from the East (including from the USSR) in anticipation of the final occupation of Czechoslovakia, partially revise its eastern border, established in 1919, and significantly strengthen its positions in Eastern Europe<sup>515</sup> . At the same time, plans were being developed in Warsaw to jointly resolve the "Ukrainian issue" with Romania by tearing the Ukrainian SSR away from the Soviet Union and intensifying anti-Soviet policy in the Transcaucasus. The Polish leaders also liked to talk about the weakness of Soviet Russia .

For its part, Moscow tried in every possible way to split the German-Polish tandem that was taking shape during the Czechoslovak crisis. On October 8, the Polish ambassador in Moscow was told that the USSR did not refuse "peaceful cooperation with any state"<sup>515</sup> . Having received this hint, Poland, which continued its traditional policy of balancing between Berlin and Moscow, on October 20-22 began sounding the USSR with a view to normalizing Soviet-Polish relations, which had aggravated during the Czechoslovak crisis in the summer of 1938. On November 4, Moscow proposed signing a communiqué on the normalization of relations, which, after consultations, was signed on 27 November. The preparation of this communiqué gave rise to hopes in Moscow that "in case of need, Poland would extend a hand for help to the Soviet Union" wishful thinking, since Poland under no circumstances was going to turn to the USSR for help. <sup>516</sup>. Of course, in this case, the Soviet side, under the influence of the moment, issued This became obvious immediately after the signing of the Soviet-Polish communiqué.

If Moscow tried to create the impression of an anti-German orientation of this document, then Warsaw pursued the exact opposite goal . Already on November 28, Poland notified Germany that this declaration applies only to bilateral Soviet-Polish relations and is not aimed at involving the USSR in solving European problems. At the same time, the Polish leadership feared that too close rapprochement with Germany could lead to the loss of the opportunity to pursue an independent foreign policy, therefore, despite repeated discussions of German proposals in October

1938 - January 1939, Berlin did not receive the desired answer, although, apparently, according to 518 Initially, the agreement of Warsaw was considered almost a done deal. Under Hitler,. Although in Warsaw certain conditions, the creation of a German-Polish-Japanese military alliance with an anti-Soviet orientation was not excluded, the position of Poland was complicated by the presence of German-Polish problems. In addition, Germany itself did not yet set as its goal a war with the USSR, but, preparing to seize Czechoslovakia, was interested in the neutralization of Poland and the non-intervention of England and France, to influence which anti-Soviet rhetoric was again used. It is no coincidence that Berlin sanctioned a press campaign regarding plans to create a "Great Ukraine" under a German protectorate, which was met with understanding in London and Paris. The Franco-German declaration of non-aggression and consultations of December 6, 1938, and new attempts made in January 1939 to achieve a positive response from Warsaw to the German proposals contributed to the same goal.

The Polish leadership agreed to certain concessions on the issue of Danzig only in exchange for Germany's retaliatory steps, but did not want to become a satellite of Berlin. The intransigence of Poland led to the fact that the German leadership began to incline to the idea of the need for a military solution to the Polish problem under certain conditions<sup>519</sup>. Beck's visit to Berlin on January 5-6, 1939 showed the Polish leadership that German conditions unacceptable to him were the strategic line of Berlin. So far, formal negotiations have been postponed. As a result, Warsaw decided to again resort to maneuvering tactics in the international arena, not taking into account that the situation in Europe has changed significantly. The soundings that began in December 1938 with a view to concluding a trade agreement with the USSR developed in January 1939 into negotiations that ended

On February 19, the signing of the first ever Soviet-Polish trade agreement<sup>520</sup>. Apparently, at that moment, both sides decided to demonstrate a certain level of contacts, and although not all economic issues were agreed upon, the document was nevertheless signed. However, as difficulties in German-Polish relations grew, both Moscow and Warsaw began to lean towards refusing to demonstrate cooperation. In the meantime, England and France

hoped to consolidate and continue the process of changes they controlled on the Continent in order to consolidate the European great powers on this basis. Anglo-German and Franco-German relations were somewhat overshadowed by the November pogroms in Germany and rumors that appeared in January 1939 about the preparation of a German attack on Holland. All this forced Britain and France to coordinate their policies, speed up the modernization of their armed forces, maintain contacts with the USSR and at the same time seek a comprehensive agreement with Germany in the spirit of Munich. As the secret Anglo-German economic talks in October 1938-March 1939 showed, the prospect of a broad economic agreement between the two countries was quite real. This was especially evident in the course of economic negotiations in Düsseldorf on March 15-16, 1939, which ended with the signing of a cartel agreement by representatives of the industries of both countries. From October 1938, France also intensified the process of rapprochement with Germany, which was supported by England. London and Paris, in principle, did not exclude the recognition of Eastern Europe as a zone of German influence, provided that the German threat was eliminated for themselves and the unilateral expansionist actions of Berlin ceased. In the opinion of the British leadership, this opened up prospects for further movement towards a comprehensive agreement between England, France, Germany, and Italy. On December 19, 1938, the Soviet-German trade agreement was extended to 1939 without any

delay. On December 22, Berlin offered the USSR to resume negotiations on a 200 million loan, hinting at the need for a general normalization of relations. Fearing a German-Polish rapprochement as a result of the visit of Polish Foreign Minister J. Beck to Germany on

January 5-6, 1939, the Soviet side agreed to start economic negotiations on January 11, and the next day Hitler talked for several minutes at a diplomatic reception with the Soviet plenipotentiary that became a sensation in diplomatic circles. Thus, Germany tried to put pressure on England, France and Poland, forcing them to make concessions, hinting at the possibility of further developing contacts with the USSR<sup>522</sup>. Having signed an agreement with England on the supply of coal, Germany on January 20 notified the USSR that a German representative would arrive in Moscow on January 30 to conduct economic negotiations. In an effort to raise the importance of the USSR in Europe, the Soviet side on January 27 initiated the penetration of information about

this in the English press. Not wanting to irritate England and Poland, Germany on January 28 announced the postponement of the negotiations. Naturally, the USSR was dissatisfied with the fact that Germany was looking back at England, since this confirmed the possibility of reviving the "agreement of four". True, the negotiations were not finally interrupted and continued sluggishly in the following months. The political situation continued to change. On January 2, 1939, Poland established consular relations with Manchu-Jou-Guo, which 523 was perceived with caution in Moscow by I. von Ribbentrop in Warsaw on January 26,

1939 showed that Poland was still not ready for an agreement with

Germany<sup>524</sup>. Expecting to become the leading force on the continent, Germany sought recognition of the status of a world power from England and France, which was impossible without a show of force or even defeat of these countries. By March 1939, it became clear to the German leadership that, although German influence in Eastern Europe had increased significantly, it still had not become decisive. Achieving this goal required new political action. The final elimination of Czechoslovakia allowed Germany to demonstrate its strength to its eastern neighbors, making them more accommodating, and significantly reduce the danger of an anti-German alliance in Eastern Europe. According to Berlin, the solution of the Czechoslovak question would lead to the neutralization of Poland, which would be forced to accept the German proposals, to the economic subordination of Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia. The return of Memel (Klaipeda) would lead to German control over Lithuania and the strengthening of German influence in the Baltics. This would have provided the rear for the war in the West, which was considered in Berlin as the first stage in ensuring German hegemony in Europe. Only

after solving this problem, Germany could afford the anti-Soviet campaign **of the** <sup>525</sup>.

#### **USSR, Poland and the political crisis of 1939.**

provided no countermeasures. On March 14, Slovakia, under pressure from Germany, declared independence, and the President of Czechoslovakia, E. Gaha, left for Berlin, where, during the "negotiations", he agreed to the political reorganization of his country. On March 15, German troops entered the Czech Republic, on whose territory the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was created. Initially, the reaction of England and France was rather restrained, but as public opinion aroused, London and Paris toughened their position and on March 18, like the USSR, they protested the actions of Germany, and the English and French ambassadors were recalled from Berlin "for consultations". The US also did not recognize the annexations and froze Czechoslovak assets in its banks. England formally did the same, but the Czechoslovak gold was secretly returned to Prague.

Rumors about the threat of a German attack on Romania prompted England to intensify its policy in Eastern Europe, and on March 18, she asked the USSR, Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey about their actions in the event of a German attack on Romania. In turn, these countries asked Britain about her intentions, and the USSR proposed to convene a conference with the participation of the USSR, Britain, France, Poland, Romania and Turkey to discuss the situation. On March 21, England put forward a counterproposal to sign an Anglo-French-Soviet-Polish declaration on consultations in the event of aggression. The discussion of this London proposal revealed that Poland and Romania do not want to sign the document if it bears the signature of a Soviet representative. In turn, Moscow, fearing to push Warsaw into the arms of Berlin, was not going to sign this document without the participation of Poland<sup>527</sup>. England was faced with the problem of how to ensure the involvement of the USSR in solving issues of European politics, which it had previously invariably rejected, at a time when many countries, whose opinion London tried to take into account, did not approve of flirting with Moscow. As a result, by the end of March, the issue of a declaration was dropped, and the above problem was again postponed to the future<sup>528</sup>.

Meanwhile, on March 21, Germany demanded that Lithuania transfer the Klaipeda (Memel) region to it. All hopes of Kaunas for the support of England, France and Poland were in vain. Poland was not going to worsen relations with Germany, although it would not mind moving its borders to the west in the future, and England was preoccupied with rumors about an imminent German attack on Poland and a possible Germanopol rapprochement. As a result, on March 23, German troops entered Klaipeda (Memel). On the same day, the German-Slovak treaty was signed, clearly showing whose influence prevails in this new European country. At the same time, on

March 21, Germany again offered Poland to resolve the issue of the transfer of Danzig and the "Polish corridor" in exchange for joining the Anti-Comintern Pact with the prospect of

anti-Soviet actions Beck was invited to Berlin for negotiations. In the course of German-Polish contacts, proposals were heard from Berlin to exchange the "Polish corridor" for Lithuania and Latvia<sup>532</sup>. While waiting for a response from Warsaw, the German leadership still hoped to achieve its goal of limiting itself to diplomatic pressure. Meanwhile, on March 23, a German-Romanian economic agreement was signed, which significantly strengthened Germany's influence in this country, and Poland announced to England that it would not sign a joint declaration with the USSR, but offered London an agreement on consultations in the event of a threat of aggression and carried out a partial mobilization that affected 9th, 20th, 26th, 30th Infantry Divisions and the Novogrudok Cavalry Brigade<sup>533</sup>.

At 10 am on March 24, the head of the 2nd department of the Polish General Staff handed over to the Soviet military attaché an official message:

***"In connection with the events in Europe, the Polish command took appropriate measures to strengthen the military readiness of the army and the country. This strengthening of the army should be regarded as measures to secure its borders. All these measures are by no means directed against the USSR."***

At the same time, the Polish press launched a noisy anti-German campaign. At the same time, Berlin was informed that Warsaw remained opposed to involving the USSR in solving European problems. On March 25,

Hitler told the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Colonel General W. von Brauchitsch, that although he was not going to "solve the Polish question" in the near future, it should be developed. Not wanting to be a junior partner of the Third Reich, on March 26 Poland finally refused to accept the German proposal for a territorial settlement, and on March 28 announced that the change in the status quo in Danzig would be considered an attack on Poland, thereby thwarting the implementation of the Nazi putsch there. Under these conditions, the German leadership began to lean towards a military solution to the Polish question. In the meantime, trying to prevent Poland from going over to the German camp, to get her consent to the guarantee of Romania's borders and to restrain German expansion, England agreed to unilateral guarantees of Poland's independence. Despite Warsaw's requests to keep them secret, on March 31 the guarantees were published, but at the same time England did not refuse to promote the German-Polish settlement. Nevertheless, Poland still refused to guarantee the borders of Romania, believing that Western support would allow further maneuvering between Berlin

and Moscow. These British guarantees pushed Germany to demonstrate their worthlessness, Poland to further intransigence towards its neighbors, the Soviet Union was again shown its "second-class", and the problem of supporting Romania was not resolved. On March 28, the USSR declared its interests in Estonia and Latvia<sup>537</sup>. In the meantime, during the military negotiations that began on March 27, Britain and France agreed that in the event of war, England would send to France initially 2 divisions, 11 months later, 2 more divisions, and 18 months later, 2 tank divisions. Options for helping Poland were not even considered. The main method of military operations of the Western Allies was to be the defense and economic blockade of Germany. The actions of the Air Force were limited only to military installations. Based on these plans, Britain and France were interested in prolonging the war in Eastern Europe, which would bind the German initiative and allow them to better prepare for the war.

On April 1, Berlin threatened to terminate the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 if London did not stop the policy of "encircling Germany". On April 4-6, during the Anglo-Polish negotiations, the parties gave each other mutual guarantees of independence, and also "it was agreed that the above agreement would not prevent any of the governments from concluding an agreement with other countries in the common interest of strengthening peace". The Polish foreign minister hoped that an Anglo-Polish rapprochement would strengthen the Franco-Polish alliance and force Germany to normalize relations with England and Poland. In a sense, it was an attempt to return to the politics of equilibrium. However, according to Berlin, the rapprochement between Warsaw and London testified to the growing intransigence of Poland and required a military solution to this problem. This was also facilitated by the double game of England and France in relation to Germany, which only convinced the German leadership of an insignificant risk in the event of a war with Poland. With regard to Soviet-German relations, Beck was sure that there were no possibilities for their normalization. On April 4, a TASS report was published in

Moscow, which stated that, contrary to the statements of French newspapers, the USSR did not undertake obligations "in case of war to supply Poland with military materials and close its raw material market to Germany"<sup>541</sup>. Meanwhile, German diplomatic pressure on Poland was mounting. On April 5, the German ambassador was recalled from Warsaw on "vacation", all negotiations were curtailed, but, according to the German leadership, Poland should have

maintain the impression that it is still possible to "fix". At the same time, concrete military planning began, the tasks of which were determined by the "Directive on the unified preparation of the armed forces for war for 1939-1940", approved by Hitler on April 11. Now the German leadership was concerned about the localization of the future conflict. On April 13, France confirmed the Franco-Polish treaty of

1921.<sup>542</sup> On April 1, Moscow notified London that, since the question of a declaration was out of the question, "we consider ourselves free from any obligations." To the question whether the USSR intends to continue to help the victims of aggression, the answer was given, "that maybe we will help in certain cases, but that we consider ourselves not bound by<sup>543</sup> anything and will act in accordance with our interests" April 4, guiding the Soviet plenipotentiary in Germany on the general principles of Soviet policy, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR M.M. Litvinov noted that "it is impossible to delay and stop aggression in Europe without us, and the later they turn to us for our help, the more we will be paid"<sup>544</sup>. On April 1, in a letter to the Soviet plenipotentiary in France, Litvinov noted that England and France were striving to obtain from the USSR a unilateral obligation to defend Poland and Romania, believing that the support of these countries was in the Soviet interests. "But we ourselves will always be aware of our interests and will do what they dictate to us. Why should we pledge ourselves in advance, without deriving absolutely any benefit from these obligations for ourselves ?

On April 17, Poland and Romania confirmed that their alliance treaty was directed only against the

USSR<sup>547</sup>. On April 28, Germany terminated the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 and the non-aggression pact with Poland of 1934, however, it was stated that Berlin was ready to negotiate a new agreement. On April 30, the German side informed France unofficially that either London and Paris would convince Poland to compromise, or Germany would be forced to improve relations with Moscow<sup>548</sup>. Faced with the fact of the collapse of his entire foreign policy concept and taking into account the pressure of public opinion, on May 5, speaking in the Sejm, Beck announced his readiness for equal negotiations with Germany. In fact, this response to Hitler's speech meant a new rejection by Warsaw of the German proposals, since they contained "insufficient compensation"<sup>549</sup>. It is clear that this speech was negatively perceived in Berlin, where it was concluded that Poland could not be decomposed from within, like Czechoslovakia. At the same time, it was brought to the attention of Germany that Beck's speech was "only a diplomatic game", since Poland could not agree to the transfer of Danzig to Germany, otherwise the government would lose power over the country. Moreover, the Anglo-French guarantees do not change the Polish policy towards Germany at all. "If Poland ... entered into an agreement with the Soviet Union, then and only then would there be grounds for asserting a change in foreign policy. But Poland has refused to participate in such a combination in the past and continues to do so now." Just at the moment, Beck, trying to stay in power, could not openly continue the policy of cooperation with

Germany<sup>550</sup>. Naturally, Moscow carefully followed the developments in the international arena and, in particular, the position of Warsaw. Just like England, the USSR tried to avoid everything that could push Poland to make concessions to Germany. At the same time, the Soviet leadership negatively assessed Poland's unwillingness to cooperate with the USSR in collective actions against aggression<sup>551</sup>. It is clear that the USSR, striving to return to Europe as a great power, paid much more attention to the negotiations that began in mid-April 1939 with England and France on a mutual assistance treaty and contacts with Germany, playing on the contradictions of which it was possible, in the opinion of the Soviet leadership to secure their interests. In all this diplomatic game, not the last role was assigned to the position of Poland. These Anglo-French-Soviet, Anglo-German, and Soviet-German contacts in the spring-summer of 1939 have been repeatedly and with varying degrees of detail<sup>552</sup> described in studies here, limiting ourselves to mentioning only the main events in connection with the problems of German-

Polish and Soviet-Polish relations. Already in April 1939, the Soviet side again received confirmation to cooperate with its eastern neighbor on an anti-German basis in<sup>553</sup> that Poland was not ready. However, during the April with Litvinov, the Polish ambassador to Moscow, Grzybowski, expressed the idea that "when necessary, Poland will turn to the USSR for help." In response, Litvinov quite sensibly remarked that "it can apply when it is already too late" and for the USSR "the position of a general automatic reserve is hardly acceptable"<sup>554</sup>. Thus, the Polish ambassador was given to understand that Soviet assistance could not be

provided automatically, this issue should be agreed in advance. Informing the Soviet side about Poland's policy, Grzybowski said on April 22 that the Polish side had rejected the German proposals and would "under no circumstances allow German influence" on its foreign policy. It was also stated that Poland, like the USSR, was interested in the independence of the Baltic countries<sup>555</sup>. After Germany denounced the German-Polish agreement of 1934, Litvinov on April 29 tried to warn the Polish side against making concessions to Berlin. In addition, the Soviet side pointed to the anti-Soviet orientation of the Polish-Romanian Union Treaty<sup>556</sup>.

Litvinov's replacement as People's Commissar for Foreign

Affairs V.M. Molotov was positively received not only in Berlin, but also in Warsaw. Already on May 8, Molotov summoned Grzybowski and, having familiarized himself with the Soviet proposals of England and France, asked him the question, "what is bad for Poland in them and is it true that Poland is one of the main opponents of these proposals." During the conversation, it became clear that the Polish side was opposed to "the Anglo-Polish agreement being interpreted as directed exclusively against Germany." The proposal "to give the Polish-Romanian treaty of 1926 a general character directed against any aggression, or to annul this treaty" caused Grzybowski's reproaches regarding "imposing someone else's will"<sup>557</sup>. In addition, it should be noted that as early as April 18, the Polish side brought to the attention of Germany that it "can be sure that Poland will never allow a single soldier of Soviet Russia to enter its territory." Thus, Poland once again proved that "it is a European barrier against Bolshevism" and will influence England so that it does not agree to an agreement with the USSR without taking into account the interests of Warsaw<sup>558</sup>. Even after Germany's annulment of the Germanopole Declaration, Poland confirmed to Romania that its principled attitude towards the USSR had not changed<sup>559</sup>. In this context, Molotov's statement is quite understandable that "such a situation is unacceptable for the USSR when, on the one hand, it is

a question of the participation of the USSR in guarantees for Poland, and on the other hand, an Anglo-Polish agreement on mutual assistance has been concluded, which may be interpreted as directed, among other things, against the USSR "of relations with Poland, the preservation of its state independence and territorial integrity undoubtedly met the national-<sup>560</sup>. Thus, the opinion of S.Z. The case that, "regardless of state interests of the Soviet Union"<sup>561</sup> seems unreasonable. It is unlikely that in resolving such a complex issue one should abstract from the realities of Soviet-Polish relations of the interwar twenty years and the conflicting foreign policy goals of Warsaw and Moscow. In any case, the unconditional support of at least an unfriendly neighbor hardly met the national-state interests of the USSR, as, indeed, of any other power in a similar position. Meanwhile, Beck expressed a desire to meet with Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.P. Potemkin, who was returning through Warsaw from a trip to the Balkan countries. Informing Potemkin of the consent of the Soviet side to fulfill this request

of Beck, Molotov pointed out that "the main thing for us is to find out how Poland is doing with Germany. You can hint that the USSR can help if the Poles want to"<sup>562</sup>. However, new Soviet-Polish contacts showed that Warsaw was not going to change its policy towards Moscow. Already on May 11, the Polish side declared to the USSR that it had not instructed France to negotiate with anyone about guarantees for Poland and "does not consider it possible to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the USSR due to the practical impossibility of providing assistance to the Soviet Union from Poland." Of course, this was an empty excuse, because, having an agreement with France and trying to conclude an agreement with England, Poland believed that she could give them "practical assistance"! At the same time, Warsaw was not against the conclusion of the Anglo-French-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance, but did not want to receive any guarantees from the USSR. However, the Polish ambassador tried to create the impression that Poland's policy might change in the future<sup>563</sup>.

On May 17, through intelligence channels, Moscow received information about Germany's intentions to defeat Poland if it did not accept the German proposals, and "to achieve neutrality" of the USSR<sup>564</sup>. The Soviet leadership was interested in checking it and in tracking German-Polish relations, in which, on the 20th of May, the appearance of Warsaw's readiness for an agreement arose. It is clear that N.I. Sharonov, appointed to the vacant post of ambassador in Warsaw since November 1937, in a conversation with Beck on May 25 and June 2, was convinced that Poland would only agree to honorable offers from Germany, but she would not agree to concessions affecting her independence. For his part, Sharonov, warning Poland against making concessions to Germany, once again reminded them of their readiness to agree on the amount of Soviet assistance<sup>565</sup>. On May 30, Beck stated that "an attempt should be made once again to a reasonable compromise" with Germany. The Soviet side was well aware that Poland was seeking an agreement with



Germany, which would not look "like capitulation"<sup>567</sup>, and also the fact that as the crisis deepened, the chances of the Soviet Union to receive more acceptable proposals from interested parties would only increase. Meanwhile, in

May, Poland invited France to sign a declaration that "Danzig is of vital interest to Poland," but Paris declined to sign such a document. On May 14-19, during the Franco-Polish negotiations on a military convention, France tried to avoid making firm commitments, but was forced to promise to support Warsaw in the event of a threat to Danzig and, in the event of a German attack on Poland, "to launch an offensive against Germany with the main forces of its army on 15<sup>th</sup> day of mobilization. True, the phrase about "automatic provision of military assistance by all branches of the armed forces" was removed from the agreement. The signing of the agreement was delayed pending the conclusion of a political treaty. Anglo-Polish negotiations on May 23-30 led London to promise to provide Warsaw with 1,300 combat aircraft for the Polish Air Force and to undertake aerial bombardment of Germany in case of war. This was a deliberate deception, since the Anglo-French command did not provide for any offensive actions in the west of Germany at all. Moreover, already on May 20-25, London proposed to Paris a plan for the transfer of Danzig to Germany. On May 27, England asked Poland not to take any action in the event of an aggravation of the situation around Danzig without consulting London and Paris. On May 30, Warsaw agreed, but indicated that there could be a situation where quick action would be necessary<sup>570</sup>.

The latest Anglo-French military talks showed that the Allies were aware of Germany's offensive intentions in the East, but did not know how long the war in Poland could drag on. The Anglo-French leadership was afraid of the German Air Force, information about which was excessively inflated, and believed that the Allies were not ready for war with Germany, and therefore it would be better if the war in Poland continued as long as possible. Although the British military concluded that the guarantees provoked Germany to invade Poland, no help was offered to her. Naturally, Warsaw was not informed about this<sup>571</sup>. British General E. Ironside, who visited Warsaw on July 17-19, became convinced that because of Danzig, the Polish leadership would not immediately start a war, but would turn to

England and France, but in the event of a war, Poland would not be able to resist the German offensive for a long time. These conclusions did not change London's position on Warsaw, but they probably pushed towards agreeing to military negotiations with Moscow.

On May 7, it was initialed, and on May 22, the Steel Pact was signed between Germany and Italy. On May 23, speaking to the military, Hitler clearly outlined the main problem of German foreign policy - the desire to return to the number of "powerful states", which required the expansion of "living space", which was impossible "without invading foreign states or attacking other people's property." Germany needed to create a food base in the East of Europe in case of further struggle with the West. Closely related to this problem was the question of the position of Poland, which was drawing closer to the West, could not serve as a serious barrier against Bolshevism, and was a traditional enemy of Germany. In fact, recognizing the fallacy of betting on an agreement with Poland and its involvement in the Anti-Comintern Pact, Hitler declared that, therefore, one should "attack Poland at the first suitable opportunity", ensuring the neutrality of England and France. Further, Hitler made an overview of possible diplomatic combinations and expressed general considerations in the event of a war with the West, in which a general program was formulated for Germany to achieve hegemony in Europe. From that moment on, the main goal of German foreign policy was to achieve the isolation of Poland.

In June, during the next Anglo-French military negotiations, it was decided that the Allies would not help Poland, would try to keep Italy from entering the war and would not launch counterattacks against Germany. During the Anglo-Polish negotiations, it became clear that England would not supply the latest equipment to Poland, and the loan requested by Warsaw was cut from 50 to 8 million pounds sterling. The position of England and France, determined as early as May 4, 1939, boiled down to the fact that "the fate of Poland will be determined by the overall results of the war, and the latter, in turn, will depend on the ability of the Western powers to defeat Germany in the final analysis, and not on whether they can whether they could ease the pressure of Germany on Poland at the very beginning"<sup>573</sup>. On

June 6, France informed the USSR that Poland was not against the Anglo-French-Soviet treaty, but "does not want to be the fourth, not wanting to give arguments to Germany" and "hopes for the expansion of trade with 574 USSR". On June 9, Warsaw notified London that it "could not agree to the mention of Poland in the Anglo-French-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance. The principle of rendering assistance by the Soviet Union to a state that has been attacked, even without the consent of the latter, we consider in relation to Poland

unacceptable, but in relation to other states - a dangerous violation of the stabilization and security in Eastern Europe. Establishing the scope of Soviet assistance, in our opinion, is the only possible through negotiations between the attacked state and the USSR" statements did <sup>575</sup>. It is clear that such not improve Soviet-Polish relations. If in the course of the Soviet-Polish trade negotiations Poland did not settle the issue of transit and it was postponed for the future, now the Soviet side on June 9 refused to discuss it<sup>576</sup>. Convinced of Warsaw's unwillingness to reach an agreement with Moscow, the Soviet side again returned to its traditional policy aimed at preventing German-Polish rapprochement. Although, of course, the main attention of the USSR at that time was given to contacts with England, France and Germany. In the course of secret and overt Anglo-German contacts in the spring and summer of 1939, London tried to reach an agreement with Germany that would allow Europe to be consolidated, while Berlin tried to obtain guarantees of British non-interference in the affairs of Eastern Europe. Naturally, the USSR closely followed the maneuvers of London and Berlin and tried by its countermeasures to prevent a new Anglo-German agreement, rightly regarding it as the main threat to its interests.

In the spring and summer of 1939, Britain and France again tried to find an acceptable basis for an agreement with Germany, using the threat of rapprochement with the USSR to put pressure on Berlin. However, it was quite obvious that they did not burn with the desire to have Moscow as an equal partner - this completely contradicted their foreign policy strategy. As British Foreign Minister Halifax frankly stated on July 4, "our main goal in negotiations with the USSR is to prevent Russia from establishing any ties with Germany"<sup>577</sup>. It was no coincidence that at the end of July England brought to the attention of Germany that negotiations with other countries "are only a reserve means for a genuine reconciliation with Germany and that these ties will disappear as soon as the only important and worthy goal, an agreement with Germany, is really achieved"<sup>578</sup>. It is clear that under these conditions, as the talks in Moscow showed, Britain and France were not going to agree that the Soviet Union, along with them, would have the right to determine when Germany acts as an aggressor. This is precisely what explained the fruitless discussion on the question of the definition of "indirect aggression". As a result

of mutual suspicion and intransigence of the parties  
Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations had actually failed by mid-July.

However, an open recognition of this fact would deprive England and the USSR of a means of pressure on Germany, so on July 23 London and Paris agreed to the military negotiations proposed by the Soviet side. It is no coincidence that the composition of the Anglo-French military delegations was not very representative, and their instructions provided that "until the conclusion of a political agreement, the delegation should ... negotiations very slowly, following the development of political negotiations. Regarding Poland, the instructions noted that "direct assistance to Poland from British and French forces is almost impossible", but "the Poles are unwilling to enter into direct relations with Russia in peacetime in order to prepare cooperation in time of war; they claim that this would be a provocation against Germany. We see this as a pretext, since the real reason is that they are afraid of being forced to agree to the use of Russian troops in Poland. They are afraid that they will not be able to get rid of these troops in the future and prevent the "communization" of the Polish peasants ... It is quite obvious that if it is possible to induce the Poles to accept Russian air forces and materials, then in any case they do not want to have Russian soldiers on its territory"<sup>580</sup>. Still hoping to reach an agreement with Germany, the British government did not want, as a result of negotiations with the USSR, "to be

drawn into any definite obligation that could tie our hands under any circumstances. Therefore, with regard to a military agreement, one should strive to be limited to the most general formulations possible"<sup>581</sup>. It is no coincidence that the French delegation had powers only to conduct negotiations, while the British delegation had no written powers at all. Thus, for the Anglo-French side, it was about conducting fruitless negotiations, which it was desirable to drag out for the longest possible time, which, in the opinion of London and Paris, could keep Germany from starting a war in 1939 and hinder a possible Soviet-German rapprochement. For its part, the Soviet leadership, being generally aware of such intentions of the Anglo-French leadership, appointed a representative military delegation with all possible powers. Options for a military agreement were developed that could be safely offered to partners without fear that they would be accepted. On August 7, a clear

"scenario" of conducting military negotiations. First of all, it was necessary to find out the powers of the parties "to sign a military convention." "If they do not have the authority to sign the convention, express surprise, shrug their shoulders and "respectfully" ask for what purpose the government sent them to the USSR. If they answered that they were sent for negotiations, then their views on the joint actions of England, France and the USSR in the war should have been clarified. If the negotiations did start, they should have been "reduced to a discussion on certain fundamental issues, mainly about the passage of our troops through the Vilna corridor and Galicia, as well as through Romania", putting forward this issue as a condition for signing a military convention. In addition, any attempts by the Anglo-French delegations to get acquainted with the defense enterprises of the USSR and the military units of the Red Army should have been rejected<sup>583</sup>. It is clear that under these conditions the military negotiations were doomed to failure and were used by the parties to put pressure on Germany.

Meanwhile, Warsaw received from Rome information that Germany was trying to intimidate Poland, but until 1942-1943, there will be no war, and Beck believed that any actions of Germany are "a bluff of Hitler, he is trying to intimidate Poland and thereby force her to make concessions. Hitler will not start a war." Therefore, Warsaw decided to put economic pressure on Danzig and imposed economic sanctions on 1 August. In response, on August 4, the Danzig authorities demanded to reduce the Polish customs guard by 2/3 and remove Polish customs from the border of Danzig and East Prussia until 19.00 on August 6. On the same day, Poland declared that any action against Polish servicemen would be regarded as an act of violence, with all the ensuing consequences. As a result, the president of the Danzig sen-ga was forced to give in and declare that all these events were provoked by "irresponsible elements." It is clear that Warsaw saw this as a confirmation of the correctness of its firm line, and the press started talking about Hitler's defeat. On August 9, Germany warned Poland that its further interference in the affairs of Danzig would lead to a deterioration in German-Polish relations. For its part, Poland declared that it rejected any German intervention in Polish-Danzig relations and would further regard it as an act of aggression. Considering that at the same time there were active Anglo-German zones-even with a view to reaching a comprehensive agreement, it is quite understandable that the events in Danzig only pushed Berlin to flex their muscles and displeased London and Paris, with whom Warsaw did not even think to consult<sup>587</sup>.

During military negotiations in Moscow, the Soviet side raised the issue of the passage of the Red Army through the territory of Poland and Romania, which, apparently, was considered by the Soviet leadership as a kind of litmus test of the intentions of Western partners. Although England and France were well aware of Poland's negative attitude towards the problem of letting Soviet troops into their territory, it was decided to ask Warsaw again and try to find some kind of compromise formula that would allow continuing negotiations with the USSR. On August 18, in response to Bonnet's request, the Polish ambassador in Paris, Y. Lukasiewicz, replied that "Beck will never allow Russian troops to occupy the territories that we took from them in 1921. Would you, the French, let the Germans into Alsace-Lorraine?" To Bonnet's remark that the threat of a clash with Germany makes "you need the help of the Soviets", Lukasiewicz said that "not the Germans, but the Poles will break into the depths of Germany in the very first days of the war!" Nevertheless, he promised to forward the request to Warsaw. In turn, on August 19, Beck told the French ambassador that "we do not have a military treaty with the USSR; we don't want to have it." In addition, Poland did not authorize anyone to discuss "the question of using part of our territory

u ego

rhetoric by foreign troops". According to

Lukasiewicz, despite such an unconstructive position of Warsaw, "our decisive refusal to allow Soviet troops to pass through the Vilna region and Eastern Lesser Poland (Galicia. - *M.M.*) during these several days was neither the subject of heated discussions, nor the subject of serious warnings from any influential French figures. He didn't surprise anyone. All the most prominent politicians knew this, if not from the time of the negotiations on the Eastern Pact, then at least from the summer of 1938. Moreover, there were no attempts to "put pressure on us"<sup>590</sup>. Even on the eve of the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact on August 23, Poland again declared that "our principled point of view with regard to the USSR is final and remains unchanged"<sup>590</sup>. Marshal E. Rydz-Smigly also confirmed that "regardless of the consequences, not a single inch of Polish territory will ever be allowed to be occupied by Russian troops"<sup>591</sup>.

At this time, England and France were still not sure that Germany would go to war with Poland. 18-

On August 20, Poland, which categorically rejected cooperation with the USSR, was ready to negotiate with Germany to discuss the German terms of a territorial settlement, but Berlin, which had set a course for war, was no longer interested in a peaceful solution to the issue. England was also not satisfied with the prospect of Poland joining the German camp. As a result, the German-Polish negotiations did not take place. For their part, London and Paris refused to put pressure on Warsaw regarding the issue of the passage of the Red Army into Polish territory. In turn, Moscow was concerned that for England "Poland is an outpost against the USSR. England will not fight and will not help Poland." **Prelude to War** In August

1939, the question

of clarifying the position of Britain and the USSR in the event of a war with Poland entered a decisive phase for Germany. On August 2-3, Germany actively probed Moscow, on August 7 - London, on August 10 - Moscow, on August 11 - London, on August 14-15 - Moscow.

On August 21, London was asked to accept Goering on August 23 for negotiations, and Moscow to accept Ribbentrop for signing a non-aggression pact. Both the USSR and England agreed! Based on the need, first of all, to sign an agreement with the USSR, on August 22, Hitler canceled Goering's flight, although this was reported to London only on August 24. In the meantime, the British leadership, fearing to disrupt Goering's visit, banned the mobilization. Hitler's choice can be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, the German command was confident that the Wehrmacht was able to defeat Poland, even if it was supported by England and France. Whereas the performance of the USSR on the side of the anti-German coalition meant a catastrophe. Secondly, the agreement with Moscow was supposed to localize the German-Polish war, keep England and France from interfering, and give Germany the opportunity to resist the likely economic blockade of the Western powers. Thirdly, the subjective moment also played an important role: England too often made concessions to Germany, and in Berlin, apparently, they got used to this to a certain extent. The USSR, on the contrary, was too uncompromising, and the readiness for an agreement expressed by Moscow should have been used without delay. In addition, this would finally bury the already not very successful Anglo-French-Soviet military negotiations.

On August 22, Hitler again spoke to the military. Outlining the general political situation, he concluded that the situation was favorable to Germany, the intervention of England and France in the German-Polish conflict was unlikely, they would not be able to help Poland, and an agreement would be concluded with the USSR, which would also reduce the threat of an economic blockade of Germany. Under these conditions, it is worth taking a risk and defeating Poland, while at the same time holding back the West. At the same time, it was necessary to quickly defeat the Polish troops, since "the destruction of Poland remains in the foreground, even if a war breaks out in the West"<sup>594</sup>. Busy with localizing the campaign in Poland, Hitler considered "the treaty (with the USSR) as a reasonable deal. In relation to Stalin, of course, one must always be on the alert, but at the moment he (Hitler) sees in the pact with Stalin a chance to turn England out of the conflict with Poland. Confident that he would succeed, Hitler in the morning of August 23, when Ribbentrop was still flying to Moscow, ordered an attack on Poland at 4.30 am on August 26.

On August 22, the German training ship Schleswig Holstein arrived in Danzig with a courtesy visit, and the next day the Gauleiter of Danzig was proclaimed the head of the city, which was a violation of the status of a free city, but only Poland protested, while the members of the League of Nations were silent. On August 23, France announced that it would support Poland, but the Supreme Council of National Defense decided that no military action would be taken against Germany unless it attacked France itself. Moreover, on August 24, France recommended that Poland refrain from using force, and limit itself to diplomatic means in the event that Danzig announces its accession to Germany. On August 23, Chamberlain's letter was handed over to Hitler, in which London announced that in the event of war England would support Poland, but at the same time demonstrated readiness for an agreement with Germany. Goering's visit was still expected in England, and it was only on August 24 that it became clear that he would not come. Meanwhile, on August 23, Ribbentrop arrived in

Moscow, and during negotiations with Stalin and Molotov, on the night of August 24, a Soviet-German non-aggression pact and a secret additional protocol were signed that determined the areas of interest of the parties in Eastern Europe. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, the territory of Poland east of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San, as well as Bessarabia<sup>596</sup> were assigned to the sphere of interests of the USSR. Thanks to this agreement, the Soviet Union, for the first time in its history, achieved recognition of its interests in Eastern Europe by a great European power. Moscow succeeded in limiting the possibilities of Germany's diplomatic maneuvering in relation to England and Japan, which in many respects reduced the threat of pan-European consolidation for the USSR by

anti-Soviet basis and a major conflict in the Far East, where at that time there were battles at Khalkhin Gol with Japanese troops. Of course, for this, Moscow had to take upon itself the obligation to abandon anti-German actions in the event of a German-Polish war, expand economic contacts with Germany and curtail anti-fascist propaganda. Having received early on the morning

of August 24 a report from Ribbentrop about the success of his mission, Hitler gave vent to his feelings. In a manic frenzy, he pounded his fists on the wall and shouted: "Now the whole world is in my pocket!" On the same day, Germany notified Poland that British guarantees were an obstacle to the settlement of the conflict. Fearing that Warsaw would make concessions and rapprochement with Berlin, England signed an agreement on mutual assistance with Poland on August 25, but no military agreement was concluded. On the same day, Germany notified England that "after the solution of the Polish problem" she would propose a comprehensive agreement of cooperation and peace, up to and including guarantees of the existence and assistance of the British Empire. But on the evening of August 25 in Berlin, it became known about the Anglo-Polish treaty, and Italy, which had previously expressed fears about the threat of a world war, announced its refusal to participate in the war. All this led to the fact that at about 20 o'clock the order was given to cancel the attack on Poland, and the army managed to be held literally at the last moment<sup>598</sup>.

It should be noted that the Anglo-Polish treaty provided for mutual support of the parties not only in the event of a direct attack on them by Germany, but also if its actions would endanger, directly or indirectly, the independence of England or Poland, or to which they consider it "vital to exert resistance with their own armed forces", that is, they themselves will attack Germany. In this case, the possibility of German action against Danzig, Lithuania, Belgium and the Netherlands was meant. The desire of Poland to protect the status quo of Danzig, populated by 95% Germans who wanted to reunite with the Third Reich, and Lithuania, whose attitude towards Warsaw is difficult to characterize other than sharply negative, is curious to compare with the Polish position regarding a possible Anglo-French-Soviet treaty. In that case, as has already been shown, Warsaw categorically refused to mention Poland in the draft treaty, considering the belittling of its dignity in uninvited defenders. However, it turned out to be tempting to play great-power games, and Danzig and Lithuania received an equally uninvited intercessor. Moreover, Britain undertook to coordinate its policy with Poland in the event of the conclusion of allied treaties with third countries, including the Soviet Union. However, London did not manage to get a guarantee from Warsaw regarding the support of Romania.

In fact, by this agreement, England gave Poland the opportunity to draw her into a war with Germany, for example, because of Danzig or Lithuania. This was exactly the concession that Moscow unsuccessfully sought at the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations in 1939. However, in this case, London was not going to go beyond a political agreement, since it meant, first of all, the maintenance of tension in German-Polish relations, but to provide the British leadership did not intend to provide real military assistance to Warsaw. In fact, England "took up the strong, not having the strength to keep them, and encouraged the weak, not having the strength to help them"<sup>600</sup>. It was still the same policy of pressure on Berlin in order to achieve the normalization of Anglo-German relations. In addition, if necessary, the Anglo-Polish treaty could be easily redirected from Germany to any other "European power". Where is the guarantee that in the event of an agreement between London, Berlin and Warsaw, Moscow would not be among the main opponents? On August 26, the

Western Allies recommended that Poland order its troops to refrain from an armed response to German provocations. The next day, London and Paris offered Warsaw to organize a mutual exchange of population with Germany. Nevertheless, Beck was still convinced that "to date Hitler has not yet decided to go to war ... in no case will anything decisive happen in the near future"<sup>601</sup>. England, France and Poland were still not sure that Germany would dare to fight. On August 26, instead of 300 thousand reservists in England, only 35 thousand were called up, since it was believed that the Anglo-Polish treaty would keep Germany out of the war. On the same day, information was received from London to Berlin that England would not intervene in the event of a German attack on Poland, or would declare war, but would not fight. On August 28, England refused the German proposals for a guarantee of the empire, recommending that Berlin begin direct negotiations with Warsaw. If Germany agrees to a peaceful settlement, then England agreed to consider at a future conference the general problems of Anglo-German relations. London again warned Berlin that in the event of war, England would support Poland, but at the same time promised to influence the Poles in favor of negotiations with Germany.

At the same time, Poland was recommended to expedite negotiations with Germany. And London asked Mussolini to hint to Hitler that "if the settlement of the present crisis is limited to the return of Danzig and parts of the German 'corridor', then it seems to us that a solution without war can be found, within a reasonable period of time. " Naturally, Warsaw should not have known about this. If

German-Polish "negotiations led to an agreement, which the government is counting on

Great Britain, the way would be open to a broad agreement between Germany and England .

On the afternoon of 28 August, Hitler set a tentative date for the attack on 1 September. Using British proposals for negotiations, the German leadership decided to demand "the annexation of Danzig, passage through the Polish corridor and a referendum [similar to the one held in the Saarland]. England may accept our terms. Poland, apparently not. **Schism/605** On August 29, Germany agreed to direct negotiations with Poland on the terms of the transfer of Danzig, a plebiscite in the "Polish corridor" and a guarantee of new borders of Poland by Germany, Italy, England, France and the USSR. The arrival of Polish representatives for the talks was expected on 30 August. By conveying these proposals to

England, Hitler hoped that "he would drive a wedge between England, France and Poland"606 . On the same day, Berlin notified Moscow of England's proposals for settling the German-Polish conflict and that Germany had set as a condition the preservation of the treaty with the USSR, the alliance with Italy, and would not participate in an international conference without the USSR, together with which everything should be decided. Eastern European issues . On August 29, the Polish leadership informed their

Western allies that they were ready to begin mobilization, but England and France demanded that this step be postponed.

On August 30, England reaffirmed its consent to influence Poland, provided that there would be no war and Germany would stop the anti-Polish press campaign. In this case, London confirmed its consent to convene an international conference in the future. On this day, the Wehrmacht still had not received an order to attack Poland, since there was a possibility that England would make concessions and then the offensive would be postponed until September 2, in which case "there would be no more war at all", since "the arrival of the Poles in Berlin = submission"608 . On August 30, England received precise information about Germany's proposals for settling the Polish problem. However, London did not notify Warsaw of these proposals, but, hoping to still delay the war, on the night of August 31, notified Berlin of the approval of direct German-Polish negotiations, which were to begin some time later. Early in the morning of August 31, Hitler signed Directive No. 1, according to which the attack on Poland was to begin at 4.45 am on September 1, 1939. It was not until the afternoon of August 31 that the German proposals for resolving the crisis were transmitted by England to Poland with the recommendation that they respond positively

and speed up negotiations with Germany. At 12:00 on August 31, Warsaw told London that it was ready for negotiations with Berlin, provided that Germany and Poland mutually guarantee the non-use of force, preserve the situation in Danzig, and England during the negotiations would support the Polish side. However, the Polish ambassador in Berlin was ordered to play for time, because in Warsaw they still believed that "Hitler would not dare to start a war. Hitler only plays on the nerves and pulls the strings to the extreme limits. As a result, at 18.00, Ribbentrop, in a conversation with the Polish ambassador in Berlin, stated the absence of the Polish emergency commissioner and refused to negotiate. Even this did not create "the conviction among the Polish leadership that the war would break out in a few hours"610 . At 21.15-21.45 Germany officially handed over its proposals to Poland to the ambassadors of England, France and the United States and announced that Warsaw had refused to negotiate. At the same time, German radio reported on these proposals to resolve the crisis and on Polish provocations on the border. On the same day, Italy offered Germany mediation services in resolving the crisis, but, having received a refusal, notified England and France that she would not fight . France.

## PART THREE. SEPTEMBER 1939

### WAR FROM THE

**WEST** In the course of the political crisis in Europe in the spring and summer of 1939, the parties began concrete military preparations. As you know, Poland was considered in Berlin as a potential adversary as early as the 1920s, when the first plans for a war with it were prepared. These plans were based on the idea of delivering concentric strikes from East Prussia and Silesia with the aim of encircling and defeating as much of the Polish army as possible, capturing the economically important regions of Western Poland and ending the war as soon as possible. These strategic ideas formed the basis of German military planning in 1939.<sup>612</sup>

### The plans and forces

**of the parties** On April 3, 1939, the chief of staff of the Supreme High Command of the Wehrmacht (OKW), General V. Keitel, informed the commanders-in-chief of the ground forces, the Air Force and the Navy that a draft "Directive on

the unified preparation of the armed forces for war for 1939-1940" had been prepared. » At the same time, the commanders-in-chief of the branches of the armed forces received a preliminary version of the plan for the war with Poland (the Weiss plan), which they had to study and, by May 1, 1939, submit their views on the use of troops in the war against Poland, the organization of their interaction and the calendar plan preparations for the operation. Complete preparations for war had to be completed by September 1, 1939.<sup>613</sup>

**1940"**, which, in particular, outlined the general plan of the operation against Poland:

**"The position of Poland at this stage requires us to carry out special military preparations ... in order, if necessary, to eliminate any threat on her part, even for a distant future. 1. Political background and problem statement.**

**Germany's relations with Poland must continue to be**

**built taking into account the undesirability of any friction. But if Poland changes her policy towards Germany, which has hitherto been based on the same principles as our policy towards Poland, and adopts a position that creates a threat to the empire, then, in spite of the existing treaty, it may be necessary to solve the problem of Poland definitively.**

**The goal in this case would be: to defeat the Polish armed forces and create such a situation in the east that would correspond to the needs of the country's defense. The Free State of Danzig will be declared part of the German Empire at the latest at the outbreak of the conflict.**

**The political leadership considers it its task to achieve the most isolated solution of the Polish question, i.e., to limit the war exclusively to Polish territory.**

**In view of the development of events in France**

**approaching a crisis point, and the resulting restraint in England, the situation favorable to the solution of the Polish question, may arise in the near future.**

**Assistance to Russia, if it turns out to be capable of it at all, Poland will not be able to accept, because that would mean its destruction by Bolshevism.**

**The position of the limitrophe states will be determined exclusively by the military needs of Germany. With the development of events, it may become necessary to occupy the limitrophe states up to the border of old Courland and include these territories in the empire, Germany can count on Hungary to act as its**

**ally, but this**

**the issue has not yet been finally resolved. Italy's position is determined by the Berlin-Rome axis.**

### **2. Conclusions of a military**

**nature. The main direction of the further development of the armed forces will continue to be determined by the rivalry of Western democracies. Operation Weiss is only a preliminary measure in the system of preparation for a future war, *but by no means should be considered as a reason for an armed clash with Western opponents* (emphasis mine. - M.M.).**

**In the period after the outbreak of the war, the isolation of Poland will remain the more certain, the more we it will be possible to open hostilities with sudden powerful blows and achieve quick successes.**

**But the general situation in any case will require measures to be taken to defend the western border and the North Sea coast within the empire, as well as to cover the airspace over these areas. Along the borders with limitrophe states, especially with Lithuania, it is necessary to set up a defensive barrier in case the Polish troops pass through them.**

Accordingly, "the task of the armed forces is to destroy the Polish army. To this end, it is necessary to strive for a sudden start of offensive operations and to prepare these operations in advance. Covert or overt general mobilization will be appointed only on the eve of the offensive, at the very last moment ... "In order to destroy the Polish land army,

the southern wing of the German troops" can pass through Slovakia. The northern wing quickly ensure the connection of the territory of Pomerania with the territory of East Prussia. Preparations for the start of hostilities should be carried out

in such a way that it would be possible to act immediately after receiving the order, using at the first stage of the operation the units located near the border and not waiting for the planned deployment of the mobilized forces. It may be necessary for forward units to take up their initial position on the eve of the day of the offensive. I reserve the right to resolve this issue." The Air Force and Navy had to be ready for the destruction of Polish aviation and the blockade of Poland from 614

seas .

Thus, operational planning began in Germany for a war with Poland, which was supposed to remain a local conflict. At the same time, the German leadership at that moment still hoped that he would be able to persuade Poland to an agreement without bringing the matter to war.

In April-June 1939, concrete plans were drawn up in Germany for the use of the Wehrmacht in the war against Poland. The strategic concept and tasks of the troops in Operation Weiss were set out in a directive on

to the strategic concentration and deployment of ground forces of June 15, 1939: **"1. The purpose of the operation is to destroy the Polish armed forces. Political the leadership demands to start a war with sudden, powerful blows and achieve quick successes.**

**The idea of the commander in chief of the ground forces is to prevent the organized mobilization and concentration of the Polish army by a sudden invasion of Polish territory and concentric attacks from Silesia, on the one hand, from Pomerania - East Prussia, on the other, to defeat the main forces of the Polish army, located west of the river line Vistula-Narew.**

**Possible actions of the enemy from Galicia must be neutralized. The main idea of destroying the Polish army west of the line of the Vistula-Narew rivers while eliminating the impact expected from Galicia will remain unchanged, even if during the period of previous tension the Polish army is put on alert ... 2. To solve this problem, the Army Group**

**"South" is created as part of the 14th, 10th and 8th armies and Army Group "North" as part of the 4th and 3rd armies.**

**3. The immediate task of Army Group "South". Army Group South, having concentrated a powerful grouping (10th Army), strikes between Zawiercie and Wielun in the general direction of Warsaw, disperses the meeting Polish troops and, as early as possible and with the largest possible forces, reaches the Vistula on both sides of Warsaw, with the goal in cooperation with Army Group North, to destroy the Polish troops still in western Poland. In order to cover this offensive**

**from possible attacks by enemy troops from Galicia, it is necessary to quickly isolate the Polish formations located in the eastern part of Upper Silesia and quickly capture the area, primarily up to the Dunajec River. For this purpose, a special group is allocated - the 14th Army,**

**which can operate through the territory of Slovakia. Resistance to the offensive of the 10th Army in the**

**direction of Warsaw, which the enemy can provide by counterattacking from the area between Poznan and Kutnr, is eliminated by the forces of a less powerful grouping (8th Army) ... The main thing is to constantly maintain an unstoppable offensive in the decisive direction to the Vistula, on both sides of Warsaw. The immediate tasks of the armies are as follows:**



The 14th Army - by concentrating superior forces in certain directions, crush the Polish troops in Northern Silesia and, without giving the enemy units occupying fortifications in the Katowice region, to stop our advance, advance on Krakow and capture the Dunajec crossing with mobile units.

Industrial installations located in the area, as far as the situation permits, should be kept. In the

course of the further offensive, the army will have to cover the southern flank of the 10th Army from counterattacks of Polish troops deployed in Western Galicia ... The 10th Army - using the

maneuverability of its mobile formations and concentrating strike forces in decisive directions, break through the Kielce-Pabianice line and get to the Vistula as soon as possible in the area between the mouths of the Veps and Bzura rivers. The final destruction of scattered enemy units, as well as covering the flank and rear of the mobile troops rushing forward, is entrusted to infantry formations, which should be pulled up as quickly as possible ... The 8th Army - to prevent the enemy from affecting the northern flank of the mobile formations of the 10th Army. To do this, the 8th Army

must move at maximum speed in the direction of Lodz. Its further tasks within the framework of the general task of Army Group South will be determined depending on the situation.

4. The immediate task of Army Group North. Army Group "North", going on the offensive on the day "Y", the interaction of the Pomeranian and East Prussian forces provides a link between the empire and East Prussia.

With the forces of a powerful grouping (the main forces of the 3rd Army), created in the Neidenburg area, as well as the forces of the 4th and part of the forces of the 3rd Army, closing east of the Vistula, begins an offensive on the day "Y" and moves as quickly as possible in the general direction to Warsaw, with the task of defeating the Polish troops north of the Vistula by the combined efforts of both groups and, in cooperation with the troops of Army Group South, to continue the destruction of enemy troops still holding out in western Poland. On the arc formed by the Oder and Warta rivers, concentrate only the

minimum necessary forces to pin down and mislead the enemy. For the attack on Danzig, the troops of the first echelon should not be used. Destruction of enemy forces in the

area of Gdynia, Danzig (if necessary) to entrust formations that will approach later. The free city of Danzig is declared imperial territory with the outbreak of war and is guarded by garrison units, which on Y-day become subordinate to Army Group North.

The immediate tasks of the armies are as

follows: the 4th Army - crosses the border on the "Y" day with forces located in the initial areas, and ... in cooperation with the formations of the 3rd Army advancing east of the Vistula to the south, takes possession of the eastern bank of the Vistula near Kulm and below it. The goal is not to waste time, to continue, in accordance with the instructions of the command of Army Group North, the offensive from the area east of the Vistula through the river. Drevenets in a southeasterly direction. It is important to quickly

ensure reliable communication by road and rail with

East Prussia. The actions of the Polish troops cut off in the corridor

should not distract the army from resolving its

main tasks.

3rd Army - ... part of the forces contributes to the crossing of the Vistula by the 4th Army and its further promotion. ...

The army with its main forces begins an offensive from the Neidenburg region on the day "Y", crosses the state border, with the task of destroying the enemy forces in front of the Narew River, crossing the Narew River and advancing to Warsaw and further eastward. The bridge over the Vistula at Dirshau [Tczew] was to be captured by a surprise attack.

Cover the borders of East Prussia with Poland and Lithuania with minimal

forces. Provide for the implementation of measures on the border with Poland to mislead the enemy. For the implementation of the Weiss plan, it was planned to allocate 40 infantry, 4 light infantry, 3 mountain infantry, 6 tank and 4 motorized

divisions and 1 cavalry brigade .

When preparing an operation against Poland, the German command proceeded from the fact that England and France would not intervene in the German-Polish war. However, the question of whether the intervention of the Western powers would be completely ruled out was never decided. Therefore, measures were provided to cover the western border of Germany, where it was planned to deploy Army Group "C" (commander General W. von Leeb) as part of the 1st, 5th and 7th armies, which would include

31 divisions and, relying on the unfinished Siegfried Line, was supposed to defend the border with the Netherlands, Belgium and France. Thus, of the 103 Wehrmacht divisions being deployed for mobilization, 57 (55.3%) were planned to be deployed against Poland, 31 (30.1%) - in the west of Germany, and 15 (14.6%) - in the central regions of the country. As early

as May 1939, six army departments, 11 departments of army corps and 24 divisions were put on alert. Under the guise of preparations for the autumn maneuvers, in early August, a partial mobilization of some reserve divisions, as well as units of army and corps subordination, was carried out. Pre-mobilization measures began in East Prussia in July, and throughout Germany on August 18, 1939. By August 25, the mobilization of the formations, which accounted for 35.4% of wartime ground forces, had already been completed. The signal for a general mobilization was given in the afternoon of August 25, that is, one day before the scheduled start of the war. In the course of mobilization until August 31, 51 infantry divisions were formed, in which only 5% of the personnel were regular servicemen, and the corresponding rear services. By September 1, 1939, the Wehrmacht numbered 4,528 thousand people (3,706 thousand in the ground forces, 677 thousand in the Air Force, 122 thousand in the Navy and 23 thousand in the SS troops) 616 . Two army groups were deployed to carry out Operation Weiss. Army Group North was

deployed in Pomerania and East Prussia (commanded by Colonel General F. von Bock) in

composition

3rd (commander - Colonel General G. von Kühler) and 4th (commander - Colonel General G. von Kluge) armies. In Silesia and Slovakia, Army Group South was concentrated (commander - Colonel General G. von Runstedt) as part of the 8th (commander - Colonel General I. Blaskowitz), 10th (commander - Colonel General V. von Reichenau) and the 14th (commander - Colonel General V. List) armies, which dealt the main blow in Operation Weiss. By the evening of August 25, 16 2/3 infantry, 4 light infantry, 6 tank, 2 2/3 motorized divisions and 1 cavalry brigade were concentrated against Poland . In connection with the postponement of the start of the invasion, the German command managed to complete the mobilization by September 1, 1939 and deploy 37 1/3 infantry in the East (of which 14 (37.8%) were reserve),

4 light infantry, 1 mountain infantry, 6 tank and 4 2/3 motorized divisions and 1 cavalry brigade (82.6% of the planned forces) 617 . The composition of the army groups is indicated in Table. 17, in which the reserve divisions of the 2nd wave are marked with \*, the 3rd wave - \*\*, and

the 4th wave - \*\*\*. In addition, the border units with a total strength of 93.2 thousand people were subordinated to the ground forces. So, the army group "North" was subordinate to the 1st, 11th, 21st, 31st sections of the border guard, the 1st, 2nd, 12th border regions, and the army group "South" - the 3rd , 13th, 14th border regions. Army Group North was supported by the 1st Air Fleet (commanded by General A. Kesselring), which included 746 aircraft (720 of them combat-ready), in addition, flight units with 94 aircraft (83 combat-ready) were subordinated to the command of the army group. , and naval aviation consisted of 56 aircraft (51 combat-ready). The 4th Air Fleet (commanded by General A. Löhr), which had 1,095 aircraft (1,000 combat-ready), interacted with Army Group South, while the air units consisting of 240 aircraft (186 combat-ready) 618 were subordinate to the ground units .

**Table 17 Army Group**

<b>Armies Corps Divisions, brigades</b>			
		21st DK 21st, 228th** PD 1st	
		AK 11th, 61st* PD, TD "Kempf"	
	3rd	AK	1st, 12th PD
		"Vodrig"	
"North"			1st kbr, gr. Brand, gr. "Medem", comp. "Danzig", 217th ** PD
Arrived: 10th	3rd AK		50th * PD, br. "Netze"
TD	2nd AK 3rd, 32nd PD 4th		
	19th MK 2nd, 20th MD, 3rd TD		

23rd, 207th\*\*, 218th\*\* PD  
 73rd\*, 206th\*\*, 208th\*\* PD  
 10th AK 24th PD  
 8th 13th AK 10th, 17th PD, Regiment "Adolf Hitler"  
 "South" 30th PD  
 11th AK 18th, 19th PD  
 Arrived: 22 16th MK 1st, 4th TD, 14th, 31st PD  
 AK-2.09 10th 14th MK 13th, 29th MD  
 1st GPA - 2.09 4th AK 4th, 46th PD  
 2nd GPA-2.09 15th MK 2nd, 3rd LPD  
 252nd\*\*\* PD-6.09 1st L PD  
 57th\* PD-12.09 56th\* 8th AK 5th TD, 8th, 28th PD, SS Regiment "Germany"  
 PD-16.09  
 257th\*\*\* PD-20.09 14th 17th AK 7th, 44th, 45th PD  
 258th\*\*\* PD-25.09 18th AK 2nd TD, 4th LPD, 3rd GPD  
 239th\*\* PD  
 7th AK 27th, 68th \* PD  
 62nd\*, 213th\*\*, 221st\*\* PD

The concentration and mobilization of the Wehrmacht were carried out in compliance with the measures of camouflage and disinformation, so as not to provoke retaliatory actions from Poland. Nevertheless, Polish intelligence is generally correct established the number of German troops deployed on the border

#### **Grouping of the Wehrmacht on September 1, 1939**

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groupings. So, in the army group "North" there were 20.5 divisions, and the Poles believed that there were 20-22 of them divisions, in Army Group South, out of 32 2/3 divisions, Polish intelligence established 28 formations. However the Polish leadership, at least until the end of August, was not sure that Germany would start a war<sup>620</sup>.

The interwar twenty years was little used for the development of the Polish armed forces. In 1923 The Polish Army was transferred to a peaceful position as part of 30 infantry divisions, 11 cavalry brigades, 10 tank battalions and 10 air regiments with a staff of 287 thousand people. According to mobilization plan, it was believed that in the event of war, Poland would be able to deploy 60 infantry divisions, and the total number of armed forces will be approximately 1.5 million people. All offers of the military command on the modernization of the armed forces in 1926-1935. rejected under various pretexts Piłsudski. As a result, by the mid-1930s. in terms of technical equipment, the Polish Army is already noticeable lagged behind the armies of France, the USSR and Germany. Only in 1936 did the Polish General Staff develop a plan modernization of the army, designed for the period until 1942. It was believed that its implementation would require about 4759 million zlotys, however, in reality, the Polish treasury could allocate annually instead of 790-800 million only 500-550 million zloty. Therefore, already in 1938, the plan was extended until 1946, and the creation of a 6-month the supply of ammunition was planned to be completed in 1947. As a result, by the summer of 1939, a significant changes in the organizational structure of the Polish Army did not happen, but "all types of weapons and combat equipment was largely worn out, outdated, or simply not enough"<sup>621</sup>.

#### **Table 18 Polish Army in 1936 - 1939**

<b>Forces and means</b>	<b>1936</b>	<b>1939</b>
Personnel	277 851	439 718
Machine	42 310	41 050
guns Guns and mortars	3089	about 4 457
Tanks	246	313
Wedges	548	574
Armored vehicles	90	100
Aircraft	442	841

Polish strategic planning against Germany was based in the 1920s-1930s. on Francopolis Treaty of 1921 on Mutual Assistance, which provided for the joint actions of France and

Poland. The main idea of military planning until the mid-1930s. consisted in the offensive actions of the French and Polish troops on Berlin. Later, East Prussia began to appear as the primary object of the Polish offensive. In 1936, the Polish armed forces received a new plan for war with Germany, according to which they were to defend the German-Polish border and advance against East Prussia. But until the end of 1938, the Polish command focused on the development of military plans against the USSR. From the end of February 1939, the Polish command began to develop a specific plan for the war with Germany - "Za-hud". After the German occupation of Czecho-Slovakia in March 1939, this document was amended to take into account the prevailing situation. The formation of the Anglo-French-Polish coalition that began in March 1939 led to the fact that Polish military planning was based on the expectation that England and France would support Poland in the war with Germany. This is how the Polish political leadership defined the main task: **"1. An immediate and decisive rebuff to every form of aggression, both indirect and direct. 2. Bringing the Western states to immediate and automatic action from the moment of the outbreak of hostilities and, thus, from the very beginning, turning the Polish-German war into a war between Germany and a coalition of Western states and Poland. Only under these conditions can we expect a complete and final victory .**

Therefore, the Polish armed forces were tasked with a stubborn defense to ensure the mobilization deployment and concentration of their troops, and then go on the counteroffensive, since it was believed that by this time England and France would force Germany to withdraw their troops to west.

To implement this plan, it was planned to deploy 39 infantry divisions, 3 mountain infantry, 11 cavalry, 10 border and 2 armored motorized brigades. These troops were to be organized into seven armies, three task forces and an invasion corps. Operational groups Narev (2 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry brigades), Vyshkov (2 infantry divisions) and the Modlin army (2 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry brigades) were deployed against East Prussia; hiv). In the "Polish corridor" the "Help" army was concentrated (5 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry brigade; commander - brigade general V. Bortnovsky), part of whose forces were intended to capture Danzig. The Poznan army was deployed in the Berlin direction {4 infantry divisions and 2 cavalry brigades; commander - brigade general T. Kutsheba). The border with Silesia and Slovakia was covered by the Lodz army (5 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry brigades; commander - brigade general J. Rummel), the Krakow army (7 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry brigade and 1 tank battalion; commander - brigade general A. Schilling ) and the army "Carpathians" (1 infantry division and border units; commander - brigade general K. Fabricius). In the rear south of Warsaw, the Prussian army was deployed (7 infantry divisions, 1

cavalry brigade and 1 armored brigade; commander - brigade general S. Domb-Bernatsky). In the areas of Kutno and Tarnov, 2 infantry divisions were concentrated in reserve<sup>624</sup> . Thus, the Polish army had to deploy evenly on a wide front, which made it problematic to repulse the massive attacks of the Wehrmacht.

The covert mobilization deployment of Polish troops, which began on March 23, 1939, affected 4 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade, formations were reinforced in a number of districts, and directorates of four armies and 1 operational group were created. These measures were based on the mobilization plan "W" of April 1938, which provided for covert mobilization in peacetime. On August 13-18, the mobilization of 9 more

formations was announced, and on August 23, covert mobilization of the main forces began. The regrouping of troops, provided for by the Strategic Deployment Plan, began on August 26, when an order was received to move the mobilized formations to the planned areas of concentration. The order to the armies and operational groups of the first echelon to occupy the starting position was given

August 30th. The Polish leadership carried out measures to mobilize the army in secret from their Anglo-French allies, who feared that these actions of Warsaw could push Germany to war. Therefore, when on August 29 they were about to begin open mobilization in Poland, England and France insisted that it be postponed until August 31. Nevertheless, thanks to covert mobilization, by the morning of September 1, the mobilization plan was completed by 60%, but the deployment of Polish troops was not completed - only 46.8% of the troops were in the destination areas, but they did not have time to fully take up their positions<sup>625</sup> . By the morning of September 1, Poland deployed 22 2/3 infantry divisions, 3 mountain infantry, 10 cavalry and 1 armored motorized brigades on the border (Table 19). Besides, in

the central regions of the country concentrated 3 infantry divisions (13th, 19th, 29th) and the Vilna cavalry brigade, the rest of the formations continued to mobilize or were on the move along the iron roads.

Having a general superiority in forces over the enemy, the German command created compact groupings in selected directions of the future offensive. The Polish command, on the contrary, almost evenly deployed troops along the entire almost 1,900-kilometer future front. IN As a result, German superiority in some areas was even more significant. On directions of the main attacks of the Wehrmacht, as will be shown below, this superiority was close to overwhelming. Actually, stretching the Polish front along the border, on terrain suitable for the use of large masses of troops and military equipment, in fact, initially doomed the Polish army to defeat.

**Table 19**

**Armies Operational groups Divisions, brigades**

"Narev"	18th, 33rd PD, Podlaskaya, Suwalki kbr
"Modlin"	8th, 20th PD, Novogrudskaya, Mazovets kbr
"Vyshkov"	parts of the 1st and 41st PD are concentrated
"Vskhud"	4th, 16th PD
"Help" "Chersk"	Pomeranian cbr
	9th, 15th, 27th PD
"Poznan"	14th, 17th, 25th, 26th PD, Velikopolskaya, Podolskaya kbr
Lodz Piotrkow	30th Infantry Division, Volynskaya kbr
	2nd, 10th, 28th PD, Kresovskaya kbr
"Shlensk"	23rd, 55th PD
"Krakow" "Velsk"	21st PD, 1st gpbr, c. regiment. Mishaga
	6th, 7th PD, Krakow CBR, 10th MBR
Karpaty	2nd, 3rd gpbr

**Table 20**

<b>Forces and means</b>	<b>Germany Poland Ratio</b>		
of the Division, calculated	29.3	1.8:	1
53.1 Personnel (thousand)	840	1.8:	1
1516 Guns and mortars 9 824	2840	, 3.5:	1
Tanks	2 379 475	5:	1
Aircraft	2231	463	4.9:1

**Table 21 Balance of forces of the parties in directions**

<b>Forces and means</b>	<b>army group "North"</b>	<b>Enemy Ratio</b>		<b>army group "South"</b>	<b>Enemy Ratio</b>	
divisions	20.9	17.6	1.2:1	32.6	12	2.7:1
settlement						
Personnel	630	485	1.3:1	886	355	2.5:1
(thousand) guns and mortars	3644	1674	2.2:1	6180	1 166	5.3:1
tanks	596	234	2,5:1	1783	241	7.4:1

This deployment of Polish troops was determined both by political reasons and by hope to the rapid support of England and France, whose actions were supposed to divert German troops to west and allow the Poles to hold the front and go on the counteroffensive.

As already noted, the first time the order to attack was given by Hitler at 15.25 on 25 August. IN in accordance with it, on the night before the attack on the territory of Poland, sabotage detachments of the Abwehr. The Abwehr command of Lieutenant A. Hertsner was to capture the Yablunkovsky pass and to ensure the advance of the 7th Infantry Division from Zilina to Krakow. The difficult mountainous terrain did not allow the radio operator of the detachment to receive a message about the cancellation of the order for offensives, transmitted after 20.30 on August 25.

Therefore, early in the morning of August 26, the detachment completed the task - they captured the pass, but in the evening of the same day, without waiting for the arrival of Wehrmacht units, they were forced to leave for the mountains<sup>628</sup>.

On the morning of August 31, Hitler ordered the attack on Poland at dawn on

September 1, and at 12.40 he signed Directive No. 1: "1. Now that all political possibilities had been exhausted to settle peacefully the situation on the eastern frontier, which had become unbearable for Germany, I decided to achieve this by force.

2. The attack on Poland must be carried out in accordance with the preparations made under the Weiss plan, taking into account the changes that have taken place as a result of the almost complete strategic concentration and deployment of ground forces. The distribution of tasks and the operational goal remain unchanged. Day of the offensive - September 1, 1939. The

beginning of the offensive - 4 hours. 45

min. The same time applies to operations

against Gdynia and in the Bay of Danzig and to capture the bridge at Dirschau. 3. In the West, the responsibility for

the opening of hostilities should be placed solely on England and France. Minor violations of our borders should first be eliminated by a purely local procedure.

Strictly observe the neutrality guaranteed by us to Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland. The German land

frontier in the west must not be crossed at any point without my express permission. The same applies to all naval operations, as well as to other actions at sea that may be regarded as military operations. For the time being, the air forces must confine themselves in their actions to the air defense of state borders against enemy air raids and strive, as far as possible, not to violate the borders of neutral countries when repulsing attacks by both individual aircraft and small air units. If only in the case of raids on German territory by large forces

French and British aviation through neutral states will become impossible to provide air defense in the west, the latter is also allowed to be organized over the territory of neutral countries.

Of particular importance is the immediate notification of the Supreme High Command of the armed forces of every violation of the borders of neutral countries by Western adversaries.

4. If England and France start hostilities against Germany, then the task of the troops operating in the west will be to save forces as much as possible and create the prerequisites for the victorious completion of operations against Poland. In accordance with these tasks, it is necessary to inflict as much damage as possible on the armed forces of the enemy and his military and economic potential. The order to start the offensive will be given by me. The ground forces hold the Western Wall and are

preparing to prevent its bypass from the north in the event of the entry of the Western powers into the territory of Belgium and Holland. If the French army enters the territory of Luxembourg, I give permission to blow up the border bridges.

The navy is fighting the enemy merchant fleet, mainly the English... Measures must be taken to prevent the enemy from invading the Baltic Sea. The decision to mine the entrances to the Baltic Sea rests with the Commander-in-Chief of the Naval Forces.

The air force has as its task, first of all, to prevent the actions of French and British aviation against the German ground forces and the living space of Germany. In a war against England, the air force should be used to influence the sea lanes of England, to strike at military industrial facilities and destroy transports with troops sent to France.

Opportunities must be seized to deliver effective

strikes against concentrations of British naval forces, especially against ships of the line and aircraft carriers. The bombing of London will be ordered me.

**Attacks on the English metropolis must be prepared in such a way as to avoid, as far as possible, insignificant successes due to a strike with limited forces .**

To justify the attack, the German leadership decided to organize a provocation with the help of the SD, which would make it possible to lay the responsibility for unleashing the war on Poland. It was decided that a specially trained group would seize a small auxiliary radio station and broadcast a message about the crossing of the German border by the Polish army and a call to the Poles in Germany to revolt against the Germans. After the raid, evidence must have remained in the radio station building that could be presented to the German and foreign press. By August 16, preparations for the operation, codenamed "Canned Food", were completed. From the concentration camp near Oranienburg, 13 prisoners sentenced to death for murder were brought, dressed in Polish military uniforms and injected into an unconscious state. At 20.00

On August 31, a detachment under the command of SS-Sturmbannführer A. Neuzhoks "captured" the radio station near Gleiwitz and broadcast a 10-minute broadcast in Polish. Then, firing machine guns at the walls and windows of the building and leaving the body of the murdered prisoner in Polish uniform, he left the building. At the same time, not far away in the forest near Hohenspitzen, with the participation of the head of the Gestapo G. Müller, the rest of the prisoners, dressed in the uniform of the Polish Army, were shot in an unconscious state, allegedly during the battle with the Polish units that invaded Germany<sup>630</sup> .

On the morning of September 1, the German Information Bureau circulated the following reports under the general heading "Poles attacked the radio station in Gleiwitz": "Breslau. August 31. Today, at about 8 pm, the Poles attacked and captured the radio station in Gleiwitz. Having forced their way into the building of the radio station, they managed to make an appeal in Polish and partly in German. However, a few minutes later they were crushed by the police, called by radio listeners. The police were forced to use their weapons. There are dead among the invaders." "Op-peln. August 31. There have been new reports of events in Gleiwitz. The attack on the radio station was obviously the signal for a general offensive by Polish partisans into German territory. Almost simultaneously with this, as it was possible to establish, the Polish partisans crossed the German border in two more places. These were also heavily armed detachments, apparently supported by Polish regular units. Security police units guarding the state border entered into battle with the invaders. Violent actions continue"<sup>631</sup> .

**The German-Polish war: the first operations**

Having completed the concentration and deployment of the Wehrmacht according to the Weiss plan, Germany, confident in the non-intervention of England and France, attacked Poland<sup>632</sup> . At 4.30 am on September 1, 1939, the German Air Force launched a massive attack on Polish airfields, at 4.45 am the Schleswig-Holstein training artillery ship (former battleship) opened fire on Westerplatte, at the same time the German ground forces crossed the border of Poland, trying to implement the strategic plan of the operation " Weiss."

Dawn on September 1 was foggy. Over Northern and Central Poland there was continuous and dense cloud cover. Fog rolled along the ground, obscuring air targets. The 1st Air Fleet was able to lift only a small part of the aircraft into the air during these morning hours. At 6 o'clock, German paratroopers began an operation to capture the bridge near Tczew (Dirschau). By 7.30 the Polish defense was broken through, but at the moment when the Wehrmacht soldiers had already captured the bridge, the Polish captain, who commanded its defense, managed to activate the explosive device. The bridge collapsed into the river <sup>6</sup>". On the southern sector of the front, three aviation groups of the 4th Air Fleet attacked airfields in Katowice and Krakow, where they destroyed 17 Polish aircraft and hangars. As the sun rose, the fog cleared and the weather improved. New air squadrons were included in the attacks, but the attempt to catch the Polish aviation by surprise failed in full measure, since the German Air Force could not attack the Polish air bases at the same time. Air supremacy was seized by German aviation in the following days due to the quantitative and especially technical superiority of German aircraft over the Polish ones. In numerous air battles, Polish aircraft were defeated, as they were slow-moving and poorly armed. With the beginning of the attacks of the air force, the ground forces also went on the offensive. They crossed

the border and, inflicting their first blow, started fighting with the Polish units defending the advanced positions. On September 1, German troops entered Danzig, which was declared part of the Third Reich. However, the Polish military depots on the Westerplatte at the mouth of the Vistula, despite fierce attacks and shelling from land and sea, could not be captured. Only 182 Polish soldiers defended there,

armed with 4 mortars, 3 guns and 41 machine guns, but having at their disposal solid concrete and field fortifications. During the week, the Poles under shelling and air bombing almost 4 thousand soldiers of the Wehrmacht resisted. And only when the ammunition ran out and the Germans used flamethrowers, the Poles capitulated on September 7 at 10.15. Their losses were 15 killed and 50 wounded, and the losses of the Wehrmacht in killed and wounded reached 300-400 people<sup>634</sup>.

Meanwhile, in the northern sectors of the German-Polish front, three main centers were formed fight. One is in the Mława area, where the Modlin army fought against the main forces of the 3rd German armies advancing from East Prussia to the south; the second is northeast of Grudziadz, where the right-flank formations of the Polish army "Help" fought with the German 21st Army Corps the same 3rd army; the third - in the area of the "Polish corridor", where the left-flank grouping of the army "Help" met the attacks of the main forces of the 4th German army.

Frontal attacks of three German infantry and one tank divisions of the Mława defensive positions staunchly defended on a 15-kilometer front by the Polish 20th Infantry Division and Mazovian Cavalry Brigade did not bring the expected success to the Germans. Rapid Breakthrough 3rd German army on Pultusk and Warsaw did not work. Particularly heavy losses were suffered by the tank connection "Kempf", which was ineptly used in frontal attacks. Commander of the 3rd Army was supposed to withdraw the tanks from the battle. The Polish group "Vskhud" also quite successfully repelled the attacks of the 21st army corps on Grudziadz. The German 4th Army advancing from Pomerania had as shock group of the 19th motorized corps. The "Help" army that opposed it had in the western part of the corridor on a 70-kilometer front only by the 9th Infantry Division and located north of the operational group "Chersk". Two motorized and one tank division of the 19th motorized corps, as well as two infantry divisions. The German troops had overwhelming superiority over the Polish (Table 22), and German aviation dominated the air.

**Table 22**

**The balance of forces in the direction of the main attack of the 4th Army<sup>635</sup>**

***Forces and means 4th Army Army "Help" Ratio***

Estimated divisions 8.5 3.5 2.4:1

Personnel 212,030 82,658 2.6:1

Guns and mortars 1804 5.7:1 316

Tanks 9.6:1 375 39

Nevertheless, the German offensive at first was met with stubborn resistance. The Uhlan regiment of the Pomeranian cavalry brigade attacked the German 20th motorized division, but, met by the fire of armored vehicles, died led by his commander. The advance detachment of the Polish 9th Infantry Division twice repulsed the attacks of large German forces, and then moved to the main position. At the headquarters of the "Help" army, the main events were expected in the north, in the area Danzig, where the intensity of political events on the eve of the war reached its highest point. Therefore, the announcement received by the headquarters from air reconnaissance, about the advancement of a large German tank column in the south, from district of Sepolno, it turned out for the commander of the army, General Bortnovsky and his headquarters, a complete surprise. The Germans with the onset of darkness broke the resistance of the Polish infantry and advanced a tank detachment broke through 90 km to Svekato. To parry this blow to the Polish command was nothing. Relatively quickly, the German troops achieved success in the "corridor".

On the southern sector of the German-Polish front, the 10th Army, which received the order "to break the opposing weak enemy forces in order to achieve freedom of operational maneuver in bend of the Vistula, in the districts of Krakow, Deblin, Warsaw, Bzura. She was opposed by the main forces of the Polish army "Lodz" and part of the forces of the army "Krakow", who took the brunt of the blow of the German group (Table 23). By the morning of September 1, the Lodz army had not yet had time to complete its deployment to the front lines. positions. Its troops defended themselves in a 100-kilometer zone and were partially on the march.

**Table 23 The balance of forces in the direction of the main attack of Army Group South<sup>636</sup>**

<b><i>Forces and means</i></b>	<b><i>8th and 10th</i></b>	<b><i>Polish troops</i></b>	<b><i>Ratio</i></b>
of the division	<i>armies</i> 201/3	5	4.1:1
calculated Personnel	451044	138 508	3.3:1
Guns and mortars	3 863	515	7.5:1
Tanks	1084	117	9.3:1



Army "Krakow" took up defense also on a wide front, with large gaps between connections. Its right-flank 7th Infantry Division was stretched for 40 km, both open the flank of the division could easily be bypassed by the enemy. The situation with reserves, so necessary for the defense of a broad front. By the beginning of the war, the army commander had in reserve only the 10th motorized brigade west of Krakow and part of the forces of the 6th infantry division. It is no coincidence that in those days the General Staff and the Army Headquarters spoke of a "crisis of reserves."

At dawn on September 1, the troops of the 10th and 8th German armies crossed the Polish border. Especially stubborn battles ensued on that sector of the front where the 10th Army struck a blow with the 16th motorized body.

The 4th Panzer Division attacked the Volyn Cavalry Brigade from 8 o'clock in the Mokra area. The German forward detachment was resolutely driven back by the uhlán regiment. Same two hours later the cavalry regiment repelled a second tank attack with artillery fire. 12 left on the battlefield German tanks. Around noon, the German units again went over to the attack without reconnaissance. The tanks were moving dense formations and came under fire from Polish batteries. Panzer division lost 20 light tanks and was forced to retreat. Polish losses exceeded 100 men and several guns. Fight first half a day showed that German commanders with no combat experience throw tanks into battle dense masses, without conducting reconnaissance, that, despite heavy losses, they stubbornly attack frontally defender positions.

At about 3 p.m., the 4th Panzer Division resumed the attacks of the Volyn brigade. compact mass German tanks and motorized infantry, supported by the fire of six batteries, attacked the 12th and 21st Lancers east of the village of Mokra and soon reached the Klobutsk region. It was evening. Polish commander The cavalry brigade organized a counterattack. A bold counterattack and well-aimed fire brought success. IN the battle formations of the German tanks were confused. There was mutual firing. All the tank mass retreated. According to Rummel, up to 150 German tanks remained on the battlefield and armored personnel carriers. This figure may exaggerate the actual losses, but still does not cause there is no doubt that the Polish units inflicted great damage on the German 4th Panzer Division here. On the left flank of the army "Lodz", in an 8-kilometer open space at the junction with the army "Krakow", the German 1st Panzer Division was advancing, moving forward, it created a threat to the flanks of the armies Lodz and Krakow.

At the same time, the troops of the Krakow army came into action, meeting the blow directly in the main positions advanced to the border. By evening, the northern and central sections of the army were broken through.

**Table 24 Balance of forces in the direction of the main attack of the 14th Army<sup>637</sup>**

<b>Forces and means</b>	<b>14th Army Army "Krakow" 9.3 4</b>		<b>Ratio</b>
of the division	152419		2.3:1
calculated Personnel		89 360	1.7:1
Guns and mortars	1583	369	4.3:1
Tanks	699	85	8.2:1

Thus ended the first day of the war. Obviously, the first blow in the German-Polish war did not bring the Germans all the expected results. Its effect was much lower than its potential Wehrmacht, but he created the prerequisites for the successful development of operations in the following days.

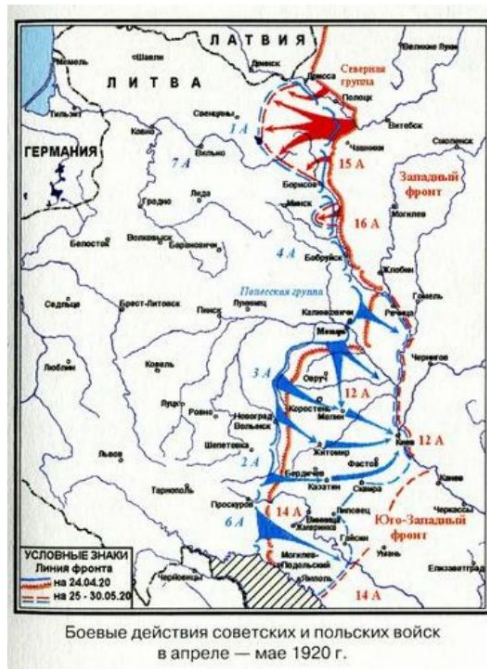
The Polish High Command was quite optimistic about the situation. Not done yet dawn, when the duty officer of the General Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Okulitsky, received a message from Danzig that the Germans in the city are clearly preparing to start an armed uprising. At 5.30 from army headquarters "Help" reported about the raid of German bombers on Tczew and about the violation by the German troops border near Grudziadz. At 5.45 Okulitsky announced the alarm.

The war found the General Staff not mobilized. Many problems arose with the connection of the supreme command: the communications company completed the mobilization only on the evening of September 2. When after a few hours after the announcement of the alarm, the officers of the General Staff got down to business, it turned out that in their there are only a few telephones, one telegraph apparatus and one radio station, which was difficult to use, since its transmitting device was far from the headquarters, in Powonski area, and the receiver, connected by cable to the transmitter, is in the personal shelter of Rydz-Smigly, where it was considered not very convenient to enter. True, soon she arrived at the fort in ten cars. Pilsudski is another radio station, however, due to its huge size, which did not allow to place equipment in the shelter, the radio station could start working only after a day. September 2 German aviation

knocked out the radio transmitter. Since then, the station could only be used to receive messages. It is not surprising that already on the second day of the war there was a loss of communication with formations, and in the following days long interruptions in communication with all armies became common.

phenomenon.

The Supreme Commander-in-Chief Marshal E. Rydz-Smigly, upon arriving at the headquarters, first of all became interested in the position of the 27th Infantry Division of the "Help" army, advanced to the Danzig region, which attracted the attention of the whole world on the eve of the war. After negotiations with the army commander, Rydz Smigly ordered the division to be pulled south. Then he drew attention to the deployment of the "main reserve" - the Prussian army. The army troops moving in echelons received a new direction. It was only in the afternoon that the General Staff began to deal with the south for the first time. It was already evening when the commander of the Lodz army, General Rummel, reported to Warsaw about a large concentration of German tanks north of Czystochowa and asked to bomb them with aircraft. General Schilling - the commander of the army "Krakow" - in pessimistic tones reported on the weakness of the army's defenses and the almost complete absence of reserves. Schilling's message soon aroused a nervous telephone conversation between him and the Chief of the General Staff, Stakhevich, who tried to find out "why Pan General has such weak reserves", and pointed out the need to "guard the junction with the Lodz army." It only gradually became clear in the General Staff that in the south, near Czystochowa, a strong German tank group was advancing.





Боевые действия советских и польских войск в июне 1920 г.



Боевые действия советских и польских войск в июле 1920 г.



Советское наступление на Варшаву.  
Июль — август 1920 г.



Контрнаступление польских войск под Варшавой.  
Август 1920 г.







Польский поход Красной армии  
21 сентября — 12 октября 1939 г.

After it was not possible to achieve decisive results in the destruction of Polish aviation on the first day of the war, the German command began to seriously hesitate about the further use of its air force. On the one hand, it seemed necessary to carry out new, more effective strikes to suppress the Polish Air Force. On the other hand, the lack of a decisive success of the ground troops made it necessary to redirect more and more aircraft to support the ground forces and to disrupt the intensive Polish rail traffic carried out to complete the mobilization. Starting from the second day of the war, German aircraft attacked many targets simultaneously. All these strikes, of course, had a considerable effect, but they still failed to destroy the Polish aircraft. The Luftwaffe headquarters, summing up the results of the second day of the war, stated that through attacks it was possible to force the Polish military aviation out of its peacetime air bases and, due to its dispersal on unprepared airfields, severely limit the possibilities of its use. Thus, in two days it was not possible to destroy the Polish aviation. Few and weak, she continued to fight, although she had no hope of success.

Realizing that attempts to attack many objects at the same time cannot bring a serious result, the Luftwaffe headquarters decides, starting from September 3, "to suppress the movement of enemy troops using the greatest forces." The main air forces are now switching almost entirely to strikes against railways and to support ground troops, whose offensive is still not widely developed. With massed strikes against the Polish railways, German aviation seriously hampered the supply of reserves and the further deployment of the Polish army. The events in the "Polish corridor" ended tragically for the Poles.

The success achieved by the 3rd Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht, which broke through on the first day in Svekotovo, was supplemented by the offensive of the 20th Motorized Division from the Tuchel region in the direction north of Grudziadz. The Germans carried out a double envelopment of the Polish troops defending the "corridor". The commander of these troops, General Bortnovsky, on the morning of September 2, lost contact with his divisions. The "Help" army, cut in half, fought in two groups: southern and northern. A small southern group took up defensive positions on the bridgehead north of Bydgoszcz. The northern group was surrounded. The German 3rd Panzer and 20th Motorized Divisions broke through to the Vistula near Chełmno (Kulm) on September 4, and the infantry was squeezing the ring in the north. Panic reigned at the headquarters of the "Help" army. Bortnovsky, believing that everything was lost, was waiting for an immediate attack by German tanks on Bydgoszcz and Torun. He decided to withdraw the remnants of the army to the south, and he himself went to Torun, where he met General Kutsheba, commander of the Poznan army. Kutsheba wanted to understand what had happened in the north and what should be done. After conferring, the generals decided that the surviving troops of the "Help" army would retreat beyond the Vistula to Torun.

On September 5, an order from the Polish high command followed, inviting the remaining units of the "Help" army to "march behind the Poznan army ... to Warsaw." German troops occupied the corridor and began to turn south. On September 5, they entered Grud-zendz. By the evening of September 6, the troops of the 3rd and 2nd Army Corps of the 4th German Army occupied Naklo and Bydgoszcz, reached the outskirts of Torun and the Drventsia River. During these battles, 16 thousand Polish soldiers were taken prisoner in the "Polish corridor", and 100 guns became trophies of the Wehrmacht. When the Wehrmacht occupied Bydgoszcz and Schulitz, it turned out that the Polish authorities had organized the massacre of the Germans living in these cities - citizens of Poland. This was the first atrocity against civilians in World War II. At the same time, the struggle

continued on the Mlava defensive positions. The offensive of the 3rd German army from East Prussia to the south did not develop for three days due to the stubborn resistance of units of the Modlin army. Attempts to break the defense with air strikes were also unsuccessful. But during these battles, the Polish troops suffered significant losses. General Pshedzimirsky, commander of the Modlin army, lost contact with the divisions. The Mazovian Cavalry Brigade, under pressure from the Vodruga corps, retreated to the south, exposing the right flank of the Mlava positions. Soon the 20th and 8th Infantry Divisions left their positions, having exhausted their combat capabilities. Accompanied by German air attacks, both divisions withdrew to the crossings across the Vistula at Modlin and Vyshegrud. A 30-kilometer gap formed in the center of the Maudlin army. There were no reserves. On September 4, General Przedzimirsky decided to withdraw troops beyond the Vistula, reorganize them and take measures to hold the Vistula and Bugo-Narevsky lines. **Table 25**  
**Balance of forces in the direction of the main attack of the 3rd Army**  
**639 Forces and means of the Division**  
calculated Personnel

	<b>3rd Army Army &lt;gModlin" Ratio 6.5 5 1.3:1 144,460</b>		
	1.3:1	2.1:1	3.4:1
		107	232
Guns and mortars	878		419
Tanks	221		65

Having a great advantage in forces, the group "North" at the cost of serious losses achieved only the frontal displacement of the Poles beyond the Vistula and Narew. Although the German troops got the opportunity to move south, the withdrawal of the Polish troops beyond the Vistula led to the fact that "...in the Army Group North there was doubt whether it was still possible to destroy the Polish armed forces west of the Vistula and whether there was a need to change targets set by the original plan. The command of Army Group North came to the conclusion that it was necessary to completely regroup forces and create a new strike group, now not in the center, but on its eastern flank. From now on, the attack on Warsaw on both sides of the Vistula was supposed to be carried out only by the 3rd and 2nd army corps of the 4th army, while the rest of the army forces - the 19th motorized corps, the 21st army corps, the newly arrived 10th tank and two infantry divisions - it was decided to transfer to the southeast of East Prussia for a deep bypass of the Polish groups retreating beyond the Vistula and Narew. The directive of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, Colonel-General W. Brauchitsch of September 5 on the tasks of the

North group read: "The intentions of the **OKH include the offensive of the 4th Army on both sides of the Vistula to Warsaw, the 3rd Army**

- the right flank to Warsaw, on the left flank - on Ost-ruw-Mazowiecki. The intention of the Army Group to reinforce the 3rd Army by transferring forces - especially mobile ones - from the 4th Army is in line with the opinion of the OKH. It is necessary to avoid the far range of the movement of the eastern flank and limit the advance on the Warsaw-Ostrow-Mazowiecki line. In accordance with the directive, the headquarters of Army Group North, by order of September 5, significantly reduced the depth and scope of the planned new offensive, the 4th Army aimed part of its forces at Warsaw, and the 3rd Army received the task of "capturing the Narew crossings, sending right-flank formations to Warsaw, and the left-flank, inflicting the main blow, a little to the east, to Rozhan.

The Polish troops received a respite, retreated behind the Vistula and Narew, strengthened the defenses of Modlin and Warsaw, and set about creating a new defensive front. The Polish command on the northern sector of the front was now faced with the task of creating a new defensive line behind the Narew, Bug, Vistula and trying to delay the Germans. It disposed of the days gained as a result of the retreat beyond the Vistula. To create a new front, withdrawn units, newly arriving troops, as well as garrisons located near cities were used. The defensive line on the southern banks of the Narew and the Bug turned out to be weak. Many of the units that arrived after the fighting were so exhausted that it could not be

and speeches about using them in further battles, and new formations have not yet had time to fully concentrate. On September 6,

the German 3rd Army advanced to the lower reaches of the Narew. An attempt by two infantry divisions of its 1st Army Corps to cross the river on both sides of Pultusk was resolutely repelled by the Mazovian Cavalry Brigade. However, the Vod-riga corps occupied Rozhan and created a foothold on the eastern bank of the river. The defense of the new Polish front gave the first crack here. In the following days, the "North" group withdrew its strike force into the space between the Narew and the Bug.

The development of the offensive of the 10th German Army in the direction of Warsaw proved to be decisive for the further course of the war. It was during this offensive operation of the 10th Army that the first tank breakthrough in the history of World War II took place, which later became the basis of the military art of the German ground forces.

The rather insignificant success of the 10th Army on September 1 somewhat alarmed the German command. At the same time, the state of mind in the Polish headquarters rose. The commander of the Lodz army, General Rummel, on the evening of September 1, not without reason, informed the commander-in-chief: "Our troops are fighting well with tanks." Estimating the strength of the enemy in front of the army, Rummel mistakenly believed that he was advancing here with only four or five divisions and that everything that was happening was still only German intelligence. Already on the morning of the second day of the war, Rydz-Smigly came to the conclusion that the Lodz army urgently needed to retreat from the forward defense positions to the main ones. At 10 o'clock he gave a telegraphic order to General Rummel:

**"...DO NOT LET THE ENEMY BE A DOMINATE YOURSELF IN ACHIEVING THE MAIN POSITION ON WARTA AND VIDAVKA AND IT IS POSSIBLE TO KEEP IT**

**LONGER".** It was an order to retreat. But Rummel was in no hurry to fulfill it. Encouraged by the success of the first day, he and his troops wanted to fight and still expected to repulse the enemy in the forward positions.

In the first half of the day, stubborn battles broke out on the entire front of the Lodz army. However, in the afternoon, the army headquarters received the first, as yet vague, but very disturbing information about the advance of German tank columns north of Cz stochowa. One of the reports

niy, which especially struck the headquarters, said that German tanks allegedly appeared near Kamensk, 40 km northeast of Cz stochowa. Indeed, things have worsened. In the empty, undefended gap between the inner flanks of the armies "Lodz" and "Krakow", which soon became known in the Polish headquarters as the "Czestochowa Gap", now moved unopposed and only subjected to weak attacks by Polish aviation, the 1st Panzer Division German 16th Motorized Corps. Something completely unexpected happened. Neither the Poles nor the Germans themselves expected such a rapid penetration into the depths of the Polish defense. The Polish command, with all its darkest forebodings, could not immediately believe that the German tanks would so quickly and so easily enter the operational rear and advance to the main position. Although only the "Czestochowa gap" was to blame, panic rumors arose at the front. But the German commanders were afraid of their own success and were in confusion. They were afraid of the possibility of the Poles defeating the 1st Panzer Division, which had broken away from the infantry and neighbors. After all, the 4th Panzer Division lagged behind, drawn, as on the eve, into bloody frontal battles near the Mokra clearing.

As a result, on the evening of September 2, the commander of the 16th motorized corps, General Hepner, gave the order: "16th ak is regrouping ... meaning further advance with the direction of the main attack on Radomsko. Estimated start of further advance on the morning of 4.9. The intentional one and a half day stop on the Warta, in conditions when German tanks could move almost unhindered further into the depths of the Polish operational defense, shows that at the beginning of the war the Wehrmacht was dominated by the view that tanks could not break away from the infantry, and if such a separation occurred, then the tanks

must stop and wait for her approach.

The evening of September 2 came. The anxiety that was growing in Warsaw resulted in a categorical order from Rydz-Smigly to the commander of the army "Lodz" - at night to withdraw all the forces of the army to the main line of defense and "create a strong reserve." Now even Rummel did not see any other outcome than leaving the advanced positions. At 20.30 he ordered "the main forces of the army to retreat during the night over the rivers Warta and Vi-davka, where to move on to a stubborn defense of prepared positions." So, on the second day of the war, the Lodz army left its advanced positions. On the following day, she retreated with fighting to the north, to the main position behind Warta and Vidavka.

Now more and more loomed the main threat at the junction of the armies "Lodz" and "Krakow". For the offensive of the German strike force in the "Czesto-Chow gap" there were favorable



conditions are also largely due to the mistakes of the command of the Krakow army. It underestimated the threat from the exposed northern flank and took no steps to defend it.

The command of the Krakow army during this period was much more worried about its southern flank than its northern one. General Schilling believed that the development of the German offensive from the south in the direction of Krakow created a threat of disaster for the entire Polish front. He regarded the northern section as less dangerous, since, apparently, he hoped that the Prussian army would be able to fend off the blow that was inflicted north of Czystochowa. Indeed, in the south, the German 22nd motorized corps, entered into battle on September 2, along the valley of the Black Dunaets River, soon made its way to Jorda Nuva and moved to Tarnoe. The general situation of the army "Krakow" became difficult. German breakthroughs on the northern flank were supplemented by the defeat of the center south of Katowice, where the German 5th Panzer Division, having defeated the 6th Polish division, broke through to Auschwitz. Warehouses of fuel and equipment fell into the hands of the Germans. The "reserve crisis" made it impossible to close numerous gaps. The 22nd Infantry Division, transferred to the army "Krakow" by order of the General Staff and as a reserve, was still unloading west of Krakow. General Schilling and his staff now began to recognize

only withdrawal as the only possible solution. At 14.30 on September 2, the army commander contacted Warsaw and reported to Rydz-Smigly that "the situation requires leaving Silesia and concentrating closer to Krakow." The Commander-in-Chief immediately agreed and ordered both wings to be withdrawn at the same time in order "not to allow the army to be torn apart." However, after an hour and a half, Rydz-Smigly changed his mind and ordered "to wait another day with the departure." He wanted Schilling to "create reserves from the troops defending in less threatened areas" and continue the defense. The headquarters of the army "Krakow" survived two more painful hours, until the decision of the commander-in-chief changed again. At 18 o'clock the commander-in-chief finally decided that it was necessary to retreat. Schilling ordered the already retreating army to retreat to the east and southeast beyond the line of the Nida and Dunaets rivers, that is, 100-170 km. This decision had far-reaching consequences: the Germans were given

Silesia with the industrial region of Krakow; already on the second day of the war, the southern section of the Polish front was actually liquidated, which, according to the original plans, was considered as its "support"; the southern flank of the Lodz and Prussian armies was exposed. The German group got the opportunity to develop an offensive in the southern and southeastern regions of Poland. Polish operational plans frustrated.

Under such conditions, the stubborn defense of the Lodz Army on its main positions along the Warta and Vidavka rivers, planned for the next few days, despite the possibility of stopping the enemy from the front, was operationally unpromising. The withdrawal of the army "Krakow" exposed the southern flank of these positions. However, there was nothing else to do: the troops of the Lodz army retreated to the positions of Warta and Vidavka with the intention of holding them. In the following days, a stubborn battle broke out here, which could not bring even a semblance of success.

Nevertheless, all hopes were not yet lost at the headquarters. After all, behind was the "main reserve" - the Prussian army, which, as they thought in Lodz, Krakow and Warsaw, could significantly change the situation. The Prussian army was concentrated in the triangle of Thomas-shuv-Mazowiecki, Kielce, Radom. By the beginning of the war, out of nine formations of the Prussian army, they arrived by rail and only three unloaded. The remaining troops of the main reserve were still mobilized on September 1, partially moving in echelons or being loaded.

The headquarters of the Army Group "South" on the evening of September 3 believed that the Poles by this time had put into action only part of their forces and that they were not going to offer decisive resistance in the border area. There was a fear that the Poles would be able to avoid the battle west of the Vistula and San, get out of the enveloping blows and thereby disrupt the entire German strategic plan. Assessing the situation in this way on the evening of September 3, Rundstedt ordered the troops of the army group "by rapidly advancing all units to force the enemy to fight ahead of the Vistula and San, to break the formations formed. At the same time, it becomes necessary to achieve a final decision as soon as possible, without losing sight of the fact that the goal of the armies is to advance beyond the Vistula and the San as soon as possible.

On the evening of September 3, the headquarters of the 10th Army, having taken the withdrawal of the army "Lodz" for Warta and Vidavka for its complete retreat to the Vistula and considering it defeated, gave the order to the troops to "advance forward through the Warta and switch to a merciless pursuit of the defeated enemy in the direction of Warsaw". The 16th motorized corps was to act ahead of the main forces of the army. He received the task of "moving as an army vanguard ... further through Piotrkow to Tomaszow." The far from accurate assessment of the actions of the Polish side by the headquarters of Army Group South and the 10th Army led to the premature commissioning of the second echelon of the 10th Army -

14th Motorized Corps. There was a glut of troops in the main direction. Roads turned out to be overloaded, command and control was disrupted, and the overall pace of the offensive fell.

The Lodz army, which had retreated to the main position along the Warta and Vidavka by September 4, began its last major battle, trying to stop the onslaught of ten German divisions with weak forces. The army did not have time to gain a foothold on the new frontier. On its right flank, the Kresovaya Cavalry Brigade withdrew from the Warta line. Following the retreating German advance detachments captured bridges over the river, and soon the open flank of the Lodz army was bypassed from the north. On the left flank of the Lodz army, the 1st Panzer Division disorganized the weak defense of the group of General W. Tomme, hastily created here, and moved north, to the rear of the army, to Piotrkow.

It was only around midnight that General Rummel learned about the Germans crossing the Warta, about the advance of German tanks towards Piotrkow, and about other details of the difficult situation that was developing at the front and about which the headquarters had no information for so long. Information from the troops went for hours. Now the army command pinned its hopes only on the help of the Prussian army, which was supposed to launch a strong counterattack, which would gradually include the left-flank units of the Lodz army. Therefore, at 22.30 on September 4, Rummel called the commander-in-chief to the telegraph machine and asked him for support from the "main reserve". But Rydz-Smigly believed that the introduction of the Prussian army was premature, since it was not known which way the German tanks would turn. The reserve army received a passive task from Warsaw: "to secure Piotrkow and the Opochno knot." The Poznan army was ordered to withdraw to the rear in order to "go on the offensive after regrouping." This decision again testified to the underestimation by the high command of the entire complexity of the situation on the decisive sector of the front and ignorance of the general condition of the troops. Still hoping to hold the Warta and Vidavka positions with the Lodz army, it was losing time, allowing the Germans to cover its flanks deeper and deeper.

September 5 came - the last day of the defense of the army "Lodz" in the main position. On this day, the right-flank 10th division was unable to hold back the onslaught of four German divisions. With massed artillery strikes, the Germans paved the way for their infantry through the thin line of Polish battle formations north and south of Sieradz. The bleeding 10th division began to retreat under air strikes. The enveloping maneuver of the 8th Army was developing unhindered. The 16th motorized corps of the Wehrmacht went around the southern flank of the Lodz army deeper and deeper. The army command was finally convinced that the Warta-Vidavka line was lost. At 18.15, the chief of staff reported to the headquarters of the commander-in-chief: "The 10th Infantry Division has scattered, we are gathering it in Lutomirsk. Therefore, we leave the Warta-Widawka line, which could not be held ... We ask you to notify the Poznan army so that it sends the 25th infantry division to Uniejow and Poddębnyce to provide for itself ... The situation is difficult. This is the end". After 15 minutes, Rummel, in a conversation with Rydz-Smigly, confirmed the assessment of the situation given by his chief of staff, and asked for permission to retreat, which in fact was already taking place on the entire front. The consent of the commander-in-chief was received, and the headquarters of the army "Lodz" gave a formal order for the withdrawal of their defeated, bleeding regiments in the direction of the city of Lodz.

The battle on Warta and Vidavka was over. Now the Polish command had only the only hope that the German tank group moving through the "Czestochowa Gap" would still be stopped by parts of the Prusa reserve army. By the time they entered the battle, the Prussian army had not yet

had time to concentrate. On September 4, only the 19th and 29th Infantry Divisions and the Vilna Cavalry Brigade arrived in the Piotrkow area. These formations took up defense on a wide front, at a considerable distance from each other. Communication with the headquarters of the army "Lodz" was absent. On the afternoon of September 5, the German 1st Panzer Division reached the approaches to Piotrkow and, with air support, attacked the Polish 19th Infantry Division. The commander of the latter, as soon as the battle began, left his command post and went to the army headquarters "to negotiate an offensive." At night, on one of the roads, he stumbled upon a German tank column and was taken prisoner. This caused panic in the troops, which soon spread to the entire sector of the front up to Warsaw. The German advanced tank detachments, continuing to advance to the northeast, attacked the newly arrived units of the 13th Infantry Division west of Tomaszow and defeated them. The idea of the need to act actively still did not leave the commander of the Prussian army, General Domb-Bernatsky, and therefore, when he arrived at the headquarters of the 29th Infantry Division in Sulejów on the afternoon of September 5, he immediately gave the order to attack. The plan of the commander

was simple: with a blow with all the forces of the army from Piotrkow and to the south, strictly to the west, to break the German 1st Panzer Division. The 29th Infantry Division was preparing to advance in two columns. The main column was formed in Sulejów. City,

especially its outskirts, was packed with refugees, the wounded, carts, retreating soldiers. All this was mixed up, no one knew where what was happening, where they were fighting and where they were retreating, panic rumors were coming from everywhere. German air raids added to the chaos. This is where General Domb Bernacki came in the afternoon. He changed the previous order. Now it was supposed to withdraw the Vilna cavalry brigade behind Pilica and defend its crossings, and advance with infantry divisions. Being confident in the feasibility of such an order, the general left Sulejow for Piotrkow around midnight. Near the outskirts, he was fired upon by the Germans from the city, and only an accident saved him from captivity. Now the commander began to understand the complexity of the situation much more clearly. He immediately returned to Sulejow, where he was overtaken by a radio message from the General Staff, informing about the withdrawal of the Lodz army and ordering the troops of the Prusa army to retreat north of Piotrkow. Domb-Bernatsky ordered the 29th Infantry Division to turn north, and decided to withdraw the Vilna Brigade behind Pilica to the southeast.

But the 29th Infantry Division was already moving along several roads to the west, following the previous order to advance; there was no contact with her. As time went. The officers sent to the units to hand over the new order could not find them in time. The orders were given at different times, the division began to spread in different directions and was soon defeated. This ended the existence of the Prussian reserve army, and with it the last hope of the Polish command to change the situation in the south disappeared. The "Main Reserve" dissolved in the general flow of events, without having a noticeable impact on their course. Now, for the troops of the 10th German Army, the prospect of a rapid development of a strike in Central Poland opened up. However, the

headquarters of the Army Group "South" regarded the events taking place without much optimism. At headquarters, doubts grew more and more about the possibility of involving all Polish units in decisive battles west of the Vistula and thereby fulfilling the original plan. On September 4, the commander of the 10th Army gave the order to pursue. But the Lodz army, which fought stubbornly all day on September 5, inflicted significant damage on the Germans on the Warta and Vidavka, and this became convincing evidence of the excessive haste of Reichenau and his headquarters in operational calculations, which were ahead of the actual events. The defense of the army "Lodz" for another day, the rapid withdrawal of the Poles in front of the 14th army made it difficult to encircle the Polish army west of the Vistula. In order to still achieve the cherished goal, various instances of the German army in their orders are now carrying out one idea: by moving forward as quickly as possible, force the enemy to battle in front of the San and Vistula, and break up the groupings that are being created.

The command of the "South" group had no choice but to abandon the plan to encircle the "Krakow" army in Silesia and throw the 14th Army into a frontal pursuit behind the San in order to try to cover the Polish grouping from the south behind the Vistula and the San. Already on September 4, at the headquarters of the "South" group, for

the first time, the idea was being formed of the 14th Army delivering a deeper blow to the northeast through Dunajec in the direction of Lublin, instead of the offensive planned earlier with significant forces north of Krakow. True, the original plan was still stubbornly defended by List, the

commander of the 14th Army. The conflict that had matured on this basis between the command of the army group and List was resolved by the intervention of the commander-in-chief of the ground forces. The Brauchitsch directive, issued on the afternoon of September 5, read: "OKH orders the mobile formations of the 14th Army to be sent as soon as possible in a northeast direction east of the Vistula, to Lublin. Linking to Krakow is not the intention of the OKH." Mobile formations of the army should move as quickly as possible south of the Vistula through Tarnow to the crossings of

the Lower San. Now the 14th Army has deployed to the east, to Jaslo, the 18th Army Corps, whose main forces, for deeper coverage, were sent on September 2 to the area of the Dukla Pass and here they crossed the Polish border. By September 6, parts of the corps occupied Nowy Sycz, the middle course of the Dunajec and approached Gorlitsa. The 22nd motorized corps reached Tarnow on September 6 and crossed the Dunajec. The 17th Army Corps occupied Krakow, abandoned by the Poles. Thus, the noose that could not be overwhelmed in Silesia, the German command was now trying to throw further to the east.

The headquarters of Army Group South on September 5 ordered the 10th Army to advance to the northeast on both sides of the Pilica. To the west and north of the river, the shock group of the army, consisting of the 16th and 14th motorized corps, aimed at Rawa-Mazowiecka in order to block the withdrawal of the Lodz army to the east, in particular to Warsaw, and to capture the bridges across the Vistula in the Gura Kalwaria area. Specifying this task, the headquarters of the 10th army on the same day demanded from the 16th, 14th motorized and 11th army corps "to continue the attack on Rawa and break the flank cover created by the enemy between Pilica and Lodz." As a result of this maneuver, the German command still hoped, by advancing the mobile formations as soon as possible to the crossings across the Vistula, to occupy them without

allow the withdrawal of Polish troops to the eastern regions of the country and thereby fulfill the original strategic plan in the south, which provided for the defeat of the Polish army in Western Poland.

Already the first days of the war in the Polish high command gave rise to the idea of the inevitable defeat of the Polish army. Having come to the conclusion about the "fatal inevitability" of defeat, Rydz-Smigly began to lean towards preparing the withdrawal of his troops to the east. "In connection with the current situation and the complex of problems that the course of events has

put on the order of the day," he told General Sosnkovsky on September 3, "we should orient the axis of withdrawal of our armed forces not just to the east, towards Russia, bound by a pact with the Germans, but to southeast, towards allied Romania and Hungary, which is favorable to Poland ... "By his order, the General Staff begins to prepare brief directives for the general withdrawal of all troops who fought in the western regions of the country. Late on the evening of September 5, these directives were sent out. The retreat behind the Vistula was supposed to be carried out in a compact grouping of all armies. At the same time, the Lodz army was to retreat to Gura Kalwaria, the Prussian army, covering its flank, was to move east along the southern bank of the Pi-face, the Poznan and Help armies were to retreat to Warsaw. Thus, the general retreat beyond the Vistula of the main forces of the Polish army to create a new front along the Narew, Vistula and San rivers ended

the border battles in the German-Polish war. Thus, the German troops managed to win border battles in the first 5 days of the war, but, faced with stronger than expected resistance from the Poles, they were forced to make adjustments to the original plans for the war, increasing the depth of the operation. The Wehrmacht formations were given the task of not only capturing Central Poland, but also creating a front east of the Vistula in order to encircle the main forces of the Polish troops. Already by September 5, German troops broke through the Polish front, which, in the absence of ready reserves, doomed the Polish army to defeat.

Here it is worth turning to the question of the reaction of England and France to the outbreak of the

German-Polish war. **Poland's allies: a**

**"strange war"** As early as August 31, B. Mussolini proposed to England and France to convene a conference of England, France, Italy and Germany on September 5 to discuss "the difficulties arising from the Treaty of Versailles." This proposal met with support in London and Paris, which on September 1, instead of providing the promised assistance to Poland, continued to search for ways to appease Germany. At 11.50 France notified Italy of its agreement to participate in the conference if Poland was invited to it. However, only in the second half of September 1, France decided to find out Poland's opinion on the planned conference, but it was not possible to quickly get an answer from Warsaw. On the evening of the same day, England and France handed over to Germany notes in which they expressed "protest" against the German invasion of Poland and warned that they would fulfill their obligations to

Poland, "if the German government is not ready to suspend the offensive ... and immediately return the troops from Polish territory"<sup>640</sup>. However, on the afternoon of September 2, they informed Berlin via Italy that these notes should not be taken as an ultimatum. This strengthened the confidence of the German leadership that the allies continue to evade fulfilling their obligations.

At 1000 hours on September 2, after negotiations with England and France, Mussolini informed Hitler that "Italy informs, of course, leaving any decision to the Führer, that it is still possible to convene a conference of France, England and Poland on the following basis: 1) the establishment of an armistice, according to to which the troops will remain in their positions now occupied; 2) convening a conference in 2-3 days; 3) a resolution of the German-Polish conflict which, given the present situation, will be favorable to Germany... Danzig is already German... and Germany already has in its hands the pledge that secures the greatest part of its demands. If the proposal of the conference is accepted, then it will achieve all its goals and at the same time eliminate the war, which already today looks like a general and extremely long one.

In response, the Führer stated: "During the last two days, the German troops advanced extremely quickly across Poland. It is impossible to declare that obtained by blood as received as a result of diplomatic intrigues ... Duce, I will not yield to the British, because I do not believe that peace will be preserved for more than half a goal or a year. Under these circumstances, I believe that, in spite of everything, the present moment is

more suitable for war. At 21.30 on September 1, Polish Foreign Minister Beck told the French ambassador: "Now is not the time to talk about the conference. Now Poland needs help to repel aggression. Everyone asks why England and France have not yet declared war on Germany. Everyone wants to know not about the conference, but about how soon and how effectively the obligations arising from

alliance"<sup>642</sup>. For its part, at 5 p.m. on September 2, England announced to Italy that "it would accept the Mussolini conference plan only on one condition ... German troops must be immediately withdrawn from the Polish regions. The British government has decided to give Hitler until noon today to withdraw troops from Poland. After this period, Great Britain will open hostilities. At the same time, speaking in Parliament, Chamberlain declared that "if the German government agrees to withdraw its troops from Poland", then England will "consider the situation the same as it existed before the troops crossed the Polish border." It is clear that the parliamentarians were outraged, but the German side was given to understand that a compromise was possible<sup>644</sup>. Despite the fact that in Paris it became

known about Warsaw's negative attitude towards convening a conference, its allies continued to hope for this opportunity, and, unlike England, France was not opposed to the German troops remaining on Polish territory. Only on September 3 at 11.00 England, and at 17.00 France declared war on Germany. The following day, the Franco-Polish Mutual Assistance Treaty was signed. However, this did not shake Hitler's confidence, who believed that "if they declared war on us, it was in order to save their face, and besides, this does not mean that they will fight"<sup>645</sup>. Indeed, after the formal declaration of war on the Franco-German border, nothing has changed. The Germans continued to build fortifications, and the French troops, whose advanced units were forbidden to load their weapons with live shells and cartridges, stared blankly at German territory. Near the Saarbrücken, the French posted huge posters with the inscription:

**"WE WILL NOT FIRE THE FIRST SHOT IN THIS WAR!"** On many stretches of the border, French and German troops exchanged visits, food and alcoholic beverages<sup>646</sup>.

Although the declaration of war by London and Paris caused some confusion in Berlin, the constant lull on the Western Front convinced the German leadership that the Allies were unlikely to take any real action. Therefore, the new OKW Directive No. 2 of September 3 proceeded from the idea of continuing large-scale operations in Poland and passive waiting in the West: **"1. After the British**

**government declared a state of war, the British**  
**at 17.00 on September 3, 1939, the Admiralty instructed to begin hostilities.**

**France made a statement that since 17.00 3.9.1939 it was in a state of war with Germany. 2. The goal of**

**warfare by Germany remains primarily the victorious completion of operations**  
**against Poland. I reserve the decision to transfer significant forces from east to west. 3. The**  
**principles of warfare in the West, set out in Directive No. 1, remain in force. Thus, after the**  
**opening of hostilities announced by England and the declaration of a state of war by France, the**  
**following**

**conclusions follow from the situation that has arisen: a) With regard to England: The**  
**Navy. Offensive actions**  
**are allowed. Conduct**

**a trade war on submarines in accordance with the provisions on the seizure of trophy property.**  
**Prepare for an intensification of naval warfare up to the declaration of danger zones. I leave the decision**  
**on this strengthening to myself. Set up minefields in the straits of the Baltic Sea, without affecting the**  
**rights of neutral countries to their territorial waters. In the North Sea, to carry out barrage measures for**  
**the purpose of our own defense and offensive operations against England. Aviation. Offensive action**  
**against British naval forces in military harbors and on**  
**the high**

**seas (including the English Channel), and against well-identified troop transports, should only be**  
**authorized when appropriate air offensive action from the British side against the same targets or there**  
**will be especially favorable prospects for success. The same applies to the use of naval aviation**  
**formations. I reserve the decision on raids on the territory of the English metropolis and merchant**  
**ships. b) Against France: Ground Forces.**

Leave the opening of hostilities in the west to the enemy. The issue of reinforcing the ground forces stationed in the west at the expense of the forces still available is decided by the commander-in-chief of the ground forces.

**Navy. Offensive**  
operations against France are permitted only when the latter opens hostilities. In such a case, the orders the data against England apply equally to France.

**Aviation.**

Offensive actions against France should be allowed only after the corresponding French raids on German territory have begun. The guiding principle should be: do not provoke the outbreak of an air war by actions on the part of Germany. In general, when using aviation in the West, one should be guided by the fact that after the defeat of Poland, it must retain its combat capability to decide the outcome of the war against the Western countries.

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In addition, Germany tried to draw neighboring countries into the war with Poland, which was supposed to influence England and France and keep them from starting real actions. So, on September 3, Ribbentrop, in a conversation with the Hungarian ambassador in Berlin, D. Stoyai, asked him if Hungary would like to annex part of Polish Ukraine with the cities of Turka and Sambir. On September 7, in a conversation with the Hungarian Foreign Minister J. Csaky, who arrived in Berlin, Ribbentrop again tried to clarify "whether Hungary has territorial demands on Poland," but Budapest tried to evade such hints. On September 9, Germany asked Hungary to allow the use of the Kassa-Nagysa-lanu-Veleshte railway for the transfer of German units to Poland. However, after consulting with Italy, Hungary on September 10 refused, citing its unwillingness to participate in any "military actions against Poland"<sup>648</sup>. On September 10, Germany offered Lithuania to send troops to occupy Vilna, but the Lithuanian side preferred to maintain the neutrality declared on September 16<sup>49</sup>. The only ally of Germany in the war with Poland turned out to be Slovakia, which provided its territory for the German troops and used its 3 divisions from September 1 under the general leadership of the Minister of War, General F. Chatlosh, against the Polish border guards. On September 5, Slovak units took part in the attacks on the Dukel Pass. True, no one in the world was mistaken about the "sovereignty" of Slovakia.

Meanwhile, the Polish representatives in England and France faced the obstructionist position of London and Paris. The French commander-in-chief, General M. Gamelin, did not want to receive the Polish military attaché, although in a telegram addressed to Rydz-Smigly on September 3 he assured him that tomorrow he would begin hostilities on land<sup>651</sup>. In fact, Gamelin on September 5 believed that Poland had no chances of continued resistance, which "is another reason to save our forces" and refusal to attack Germany. On the evening of September 6, a Polish note arrived in Paris, which reported on the pessimistic mood of the German population in connection with the outbreak of the war and proposed **"to strike at the morale of the enemy."** For this it was necessary:

**"1) Carry out an Allied air force operation against German territory, which, as a result of vigorous bombing of military installations, would convince the population that the Allies are actively waging war, and would cause panic in the centers.**

**2) Break through the Siegfried Line at least at two points in order to eliminate the myth of its impregnability...**

**3) Carry out at least a small amphibious landing on the German coast"**<sup>653</sup>.

On September 7, Warsaw received a French response, according to which "tomorrow, and at the latest the morning after tomorrow, a strong attack by French and British bombers against Germany will be carried out, which, perhaps, will be extended even to rear formations on the Polish front." Understandably, this response reassured the Poles, who did not know that Paris was actually avoiding bombing German territory for fear of Luftwaffe retaliation. The British took a similar position on this issue.

On September 4, the British Air Force first attacked German warships in the Kiel area. The bombs hit the "pocket" battleship "Admiral Scheer" and the light cruiser "Emden". However, they rebounded from

battleship's armored deck before they could explode. The cruiser received minor damage not so much from bombs as from the downed bombardiers who fell on her

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As a result, on September 7, the Polish military attaché in France was forced to state in his report to Warsaw: "In fact, there is no war in the West. Neither the French nor the Germans shoot at each other. In the same way, there are still no air actions. My assessment is that the French are making neither further mobilization nor further action and are awaiting the results of the battle in Poland. Polish representatives continued to insist and ask the French leadership to fulfill their obligations to Warsaw. This irritated Gamelin, who wrote: "The Polish military attaché continues to bother us! I also knew that the Polish ambassador in Paris showed nervousness and even injustice towards the French army and especially aviation. The only thing that the Poles achieved was a promise to send military equipment and ammunition to Poland through Romania, which were never sent due to the defeat of Poland. In mid-September, General Gamelin wrote in his diary that France could help Poland in 1940, and that she would prepare for an offensive on a broad front in 1941 or 1942. The British government behaved in exactly the same way as the French. On September 3, a Polish military mission arrived in London, but the Poles managed to meet with the Chief of the

British General Staff, General W. Ironside, only on September 9. During the meeting, Ironside began to clarify the situation at the front, and the Poles were surprised to learn that England had no specific plans to help Poland, since France was supposed to deal with this. Referring to being busy, Ironside stopped the conversation, finally recommending that the Poles buy weapons in neutral countries. On September 10, the Polish military mission was informed that the British Air Force had begun bombing Germany, and a transport with 44 aircraft for Poland had arrived in Romania. All this was an outright lie. According to W. Churchill, the British "limited themselves to scattering leaflets appealing to the morality of the Germans"656 . From September 3 to 27, during the "truth raids", the British Air Force dropped 18 million leaflets over Germany - almost 39 tons of paper . As L. Emery, a well-known English politician, conservative, recalled, on September 5 he went to the Minister of Aviation C. Wood with a proposal to organize an arson of the Black Forest in order to deprive the Germans of timber, but in response he heard: "What are you, this is impossible. This is private property. You still ask me to bomb the Ruhr."658 Polish offer

0 the sending of Anglo-French aviation to Polish airfields was never accepted. On September 13, the Poles stated that "England did not keep, as before, its obligations, because during the 14 days of the war we remain left to our own devices, and the assistance that should have been sent to Poland as a result of negotiations with General Clayton that took place in May in Warsaw, was not granted to Poland. On September 15, during the last meeting with Ironside, the Poles learned that, apart from 10,000 automatic rifles and 15-20 million rounds of ammunition, England could not allocate any other weapons, and this could only be done in 5-6 months. Ironside again advised the Poles to buy weapons from neutrals659 .

What was the state of the parties on the Western Front at the beginning of the German-Polish war? Germany deployed on its western border by

September 1, 1939, Army Group C, which was entrusted with the task of rear cover for operations in Poland from the threat of Anglo-French intervention. The border with Belgium was covered by the troops of the 5th Army of Colonel-General K. von Liebmann, between the Moselle and the Rhine, the 1st Army of Colonel General E. von Witsleben was deployed, and along the Rhine to the Swiss border - the 7th Army of the General Colonel F. Dolman. On September 1, these troops numbered 31 2/3 infantry divisions, and 3 more infantry divisions were in the process of being redeployed to the West. After September 3, Army Group C was subordinated to 9 more infantry divisions, which were mainly concentrated by September 10, increasing the total strength of the grouping to 43 2/3 infantry divisions, of which only 11 2/z "could be called full-fledged, all the rest were new formations that did not at all correspond in their training and technical equipment to the requirements of mobile warfare . As the commander of Army Group C reported on October 3 to the Chief of the General Staff

of the Ground Forces, "the divisions of the 3rd wave are only suitable for positional warfare only in a calm situation. The divisions of the 4th wave are only suitable for positional warfare, provided they are further prepared for defense . September, the troops of the Western Front numbered about 915 thousand people and had about 8640 K1 guns and mortars, but did not have a single tank. Ground forces supported the 2nd and 3rd

air fleets, in which there were 1,094 aircraft (of which 966 were combat-ready), in addition, the command of Army Group "C" was subordinated to the flight units, which had 144 aircraft (of which 113 combat-ready), and naval aviation in the West consisted of 121 aircraft (114 combat-ready). All in the West there were 1,359 aircraft (1,193 combat-ready), including 421 bombers and 632 fighters<sup>662</sup>.

The construction of the Western Wall, on which these troops were to rely, had not yet been completed. "By the beginning of the war, there were basically only fortified points for infantry weapons, command points, network of telephone lines fortified areas, anti-personnel and anti-tank barriers. There were no artillery positions in the form of armored structures, just as there were no reinforced concrete or armored fortifications for anti-tank weapons"<sup>663</sup>. According to General N. Forman, "The Western Wall was not an insurmountable obstacle. True, between Luxembourg and Switzerland, mainly in the section between Saarbrücken and Karlsruhe, were a certain number of ready-made armored firing points, anti-tank ditches and other obstacles. Everywhere, however, Todt's organization was still working at an accelerated pace. Most of the line was still on paper.

Ready-made strong positions were out of the question. There was no deep separation anywhere created"<sup>664</sup>.

Pre-mobilization activities in France began to be carried out as early as the summer of 1939, when reservists were called up in 49 special fortress battalions and 43 special artillery units, which made up covering troops on the Maginot Line. On August 21, the air defense system was put on alert, and on August 22 August—The system of combat readiness of the French troops was strengthened. On August 23, France began a covert mobilization and plans were put in place to secure Paris and the borders with Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. On August 24, measures to cover the concentration were extended to eastern regions of France, and on August 26 - throughout the country. Until 27 August it was mobilized 3/4 of the French armed forces - 72 divisions (1,895 thousand people, 8 thousand guns and mortars, 2.5 thousand tanks and up to 2 thousand aircraft). On August 27, another 725 thousand people were called up, and the armed forces reached the number of 2,674 thousand people. September 1, when France was open mobilization was announced, on its territory there were 72 infantry (personnel, reserve, North African, colonial and fortress troops, equivalent to 15 divisions), 3 cavalry, 2 light mechanized, divisions and 39 separate tank battalions, but these are no active tasks troops did not have

The French command deployed the North-Eastern Front against Germany as part of the 1st, Ardennes, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th armies, in which by September 3 there were 78 divisions (of which 13 were serfs, and 7 completed the formation). These troops had 17,500 guns and mortars, over 2 thousand tanks. The French Air Force had 1,400 first-line aircraft and about 1,600 in reserve, in addition, 1,021 British aircraft could be used for operations in France. Already September 4th mobilization in France was completed, and the troops were deployed in positions. By September 10 French armed forces completed their wartime deployments and numbered almost 5 million man<sup>666</sup>.

**Table 26**

**The balance of forces on the fronts in September 1939**

<b>France</b>				<b>Germany Poland Ratio</b>		
<b>Divisions</b>	<b>Brigades</b>	<b>Personnel (thousands)</b>	<b>Ratio</b>			
78	10	1800	1.8:1	61	33	1.8:1
-	-	1000	1.8:1	1	13	1:13
3 253 1000			3.2:1			
17 500 8 640			2:1			
2850	-	-				
2421*	1359		1.8:1			
				<b>Guns and mortars</b>		
				<b>Tanks</b>		
				<b>Aircraft</b>		
				13,500	4,300	3:1
				610	4.2:1	2533
				2231	824	2.7:1

\* Including the British Air Force, but without a reserve.

Since May 31, the French General Staff has been developing a plan of attack on the front between the Moselle and Rhine, which was to become the basis of military operations against Germany and was on September 1, 1939. proposed by General Gamelin to the government. French troops were to strike the main blow along the Rhine to Mainz, cutting off the main German grouping from the rear. However, this proposal is has not been implemented. Instead, the French command undertook a limited operation about Saarbrücken in order to establish contact with the Siegfried Line. On the night of September 7, the French



search parties crossed the German border for the first time west of the city. On September 9, units of 9 French divisions of the 4th and 5th armies began to advance in the forefield of the Siegfried line east of Saarbrücken, without meeting the resistance of the German troops, who were ordered to evade the battle and retreat to the line of fortifications. Having occupied the Warnd forest to the west of the city and having advanced 7-8 km between Spichern and Hornbach on a front of about 25 km,

the French received an order on September 12 to stop the offensive "in view of the rapid development of events in Poland"<sup>667</sup>. On the same day, the French commander-in-chief, who believed that these attacks could no longer influence events in Poland, declared at the first meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council in Abbeville: "At present, it is no longer necessary to immediately secure a base of attack against the Siegfried Line ... If an enemy attack is carried out through Luxembourg and especially through Belgium, we will not have enough of all our active forces to resist him. Although the Council approved the decision to stop

the offensive, Gamelin told the head of the Polish military mission in France on September 14: "The last meeting of the Allied Supreme Council determined the firm determination of France and Great Britain to provide Poland with all possible assistance. The forms of this assistance are outlined jointly with our British allies after a thorough analysis of the general situation, and I can assure you that not a single possibility of direct assistance to Poland and her army will be left without attention.

Analyzing these events, the French historian A. Gutar remarks not without wit: "The French and the British felt relief, and since the Germans also felt it, it can be said that it rarely happened that any decision caused such unanimous relief in both camps"<sup>669</sup>. As J. Mordal rightly noted, "the decision taken in Abville on September 12, 1939 by the Supreme Council of the Allies was not only a rejection of this word, it was a real surrender without a fight"<sup>670</sup>.

At the same time, the French press launched a raucous campaign about "operations against Germany", which were said to present it with "a difficult strategic problem". On September 14, when the advance of the troops stopped, the press reported that "military operations on the Western Front between the Rhine and the Moselle continue. The French surround Saarbrücken from the east and west. On September 19, when the French units were withdrawn to their original positions, a message followed that "the battles that were previously limited to the Saarbrücken region now covered the entire front with a length of 160 km"<sup>671</sup>. On October 3-4, French troops left Germany, and by

On October 16, the forward units of the Wehrmacht again deployed on the border with France<sup>672</sup>. Thus, instead of 35-40 divisions, which France promised to throw against Germany, only 9 divisions were used. But the French command diligently exaggerated the scale of this limited operation. On September 10, Gamelin assured the Polish leadership that "more than half of our active divisions of the North-Eastern Front are fighting. After we crossed the border, the Germans opposed us with strong socialism. Nevertheless, we have moved forward. But we are bogged down in trench warfare, with the enemy prepared for defense against us, and I still do not have all the necessary artillery at my disposal. From the very beginning, the air force was deployed to participate in positional operations. We believe that we have a significant part of the German aviation against us. Therefore, ahead of time, I fulfilled my promise to launch an offensive with powerful main forces on the 15th day after the announcement of the French mobilization. However, such statements could not, of course, hide the fact that Poland was abandoned by its allies to its fate.

Berlin was well aware of the danger of the activation of the Anglo-French armed forces, which was all the higher because the Ruhr industrial region was actually on the western border of Germany within the radius of action not only of aviation, but also of long-range artillery of the allies. Possessing an overwhelming superiority over Germany on the Western Front, the Allies had every opportunity in early September to launch a decisive offensive, which, most likely, would have been fatal for Germany. Participants in the events from the German side unanimously argued that this would mean an end to the war and defeat

Germany. General A. Jodl believed that "neither in 1938 nor in 1939, we were actually able to withstand the concentrated blow of all these countries. And if we did not suffer a defeat as early as 1939, it was only because approximately 110 French and British divisions, which stood in the West during our war with Poland against 23 German divisions, remained completely inactive.

As General B. Müller-Gillebrand noted, "the Western powers, as a result of their extreme slowness, missed an easy victory. It would have been easy for them, because, along with other shortcomings of the German wartime land army and a rather weak military potential ... ammunition stocks in September 1939 were so insignificant that in a very short time it would have become impossible for Germany to continue the war" 675 . According to General N. Foreman, "if these forces (of the allies. - *M.M.*), who had a monstrous superiority, which the Dutch and Belgians would then probably join, then the war would inevitably end. The resistance of Army Group C could last several days at best. Even if this time were used to transfer troops from east to west, it still would not help. In this case, any action would be meaningless. In Poland, hostilities would have to be stopped even before decisive successes were achieved, and the divisions would not have made it to the west in time and were defeated one by one - of course, if the enemy had energetic, purposeful leadership. In a week at the latest, the mines of the Saar and the Ruhr would have been lost, and in the second week the French could send troops wherever they saw fit. To this it should be added that the Poles would also regain freedom of action and put their army in order . Lieutenant General 3. Westphal believed that "if the French army launched a major offensive on a wide front against the weak German troops covering the border (it is difficult to call them softer than the security forces), then there is almost no doubt that it

would break through the German defense, especially in the first ten days of September. Such an offensive, launched before the transfer of significant German forces from Poland to the West, would almost certainly give the French the opportunity to easily reach the Rhine and, perhaps, even force it. This could significantly change the further course of the war ... By not taking advantage of Germany's temporary weakness on the Western Front for an immediate strike, the French missed the opportunity to put Nazi Germany under the threat of a heavy defeat . Thus, Britain and France, remaining true to their policy of "appeasement" and not preparing for a real war with Germany, missed a unique chance, together with Poland, to squeeze Germany into the vise of a war on two fronts and in September 1939 inflict a decisive defeat on her. However, events developed differently, and as a result, "refusing to take advantage of the situation that had developed at the very beginning of the war, the Western powers not only left Poland in trouble, but also plunged the whole world into five years of destructive war" 678 .

Quite correctly assessing the unwillingness of England and France to help their Polish ally, the OKW issued September 9, 1939 **"Directive No. 3 on the conduct of war**, according to which **"1. Operations against the Polish ground forces and Polish aviation should be carried out with large forces until there is a guarantee that Poland will no longer be able to create a solid front that fetters the German forces.**

**2. As soon as it becomes clear that the ground forces and aviation forces operating on the Eastern Front are no longer required to carry out these tasks and pacify the occupied areas, they should be used in the west. As the actions of the Polish aviation become more and more ineffective, we should continue to release air defense troops on an even larger scale for use against our Western adversaries.**

**3. After the indecisive opening of hostilities by England at sea and in the air and by France on land, I reserve the right to issue orders regarding:**

- a) any crossing of the German land frontier in the west, b) any overflight of the German western frontier, unless it is necessary to repulse major enemy air raids,**
- c) the use of aviation for raids against England in Helgoland Bay and in the mined zone "West", and also for direct support of military operations at sea is allowed,**

**d) for the navy, the orders given in Directive No. 2, paragraph 3 remain valid**

a and

**3 in. Offensive operations against France at sea are canceled .** Taking advantage of the inaction of England and France, the German command increased its strikes in Poland.  
**German-Polish war: final operations** By September

6, in front of the 10th Army, which entered the Tomaszow-Mazowiecki, Konskie, Kielce line, there was no longer an organized Polish front, so the army headquarters gave the order: "The enemy

is in complete retreat to the Vistula south of Warsaw. Warsaw will be cleared. The 10th Army mercilessly pursues the retreating enemy and breaks through to the Vistula line: Puławy-Gura Kalwaria, in order to block the enemy from crossing the Vistula. Three pursuit groups will be created: 15 microns on the right, 14 microns in the middle, and 16 microns on the left ... "The German command learned to use large mobile formations in the situation of the beginning disorganization of the Polish front and their gradual separation from the infantry advancing behind. German mobile troops rushed along all roads to the northeast, to Rawa Mazowiecka and Radom.

The Polish front in the south finally collapsed. The mobile units of the German 14th Army reached the Dunajec River near Tarnów. The 8th Army was approaching Lodz and the

upper reaches of the Bzura. The most catastrophic stage of the struggle for the Polish army began, its retreat became

more and more chaotic. Despite the obvious defeat of the Polish army, the disorganization of a number of sectors of the front and heavy losses, the German command was still afraid that he would not be able to surround the Polish formations west of the Vistula. Already on September 5-6, the OKH recognized the unreality of the encirclement of the Polish army west of the Vistula, and was forced to change the original plan and set a new strategic task for the troops. The plan for this operation was outlined in the directive of Brauh-cha, issued on the afternoon of

September 6: **"1. From information about the enemy it follows that he is retreating behind the Vistula-Narew line and is no longer going to wage decisive battles in front of this line ... Perhaps a strike group is being created on the Narew with a strength of approximately 4-5 divisions at most. It is possible that it will be strengthened further by the troops withdrawing through Warsaw. The creation of a grouping in the Łódź region constitutes the enemy's last attempt to hold the capital... It is assumed that the creation of a grouping in the Kielce region is no longer possible. The enemy here hopes to retreat behind the Vistula to the southeast in front of the rapidly advancing flank of the 10th Army. Its destruction on the western bank of the Vistula will hardly be possible...**

**2. In this regard, the following tasks are set: Army Group North is rapidly advancing by the 3rd Army across the Narew in order to prevent the systematic creation of the defense of the river, and then develops an offensive across the Bug in the direction of Warsaw-Siedlec in order to turn the front on the Vistula**

**from the north ... Army Group "South", simultaneously with the destruction of the army "Lodz", prevents the creation of defenses on the Vistula ... the 14th Army strikes through the San in the general direction of Lublin ...**

**Further operational goal: to cover the remnants of the Polish main forces east of the Vistula.**

German mobile troops developed the offensive. Their breakthroughs became more and more dangerous. Air strikes paralyzed daily movements. The organized evacuation of the population stopped. Cities and villages burned. Disorganization grew in Poland.

On September 1, President I. Moscicki left the capital,

and on September 4, the evacuation of government institutions began. On September 5, the government left Warsaw, and on the night of September 7, the commander-in-chief E. Rydz-Smigły also left. The

headquarters was moved to Brest, from September 10 to Vladimir-Volynsky, from September 13 to Mlynov (near Dubno), and on September 15 to Kolomyia. The day before, Moscicki had also been there. On September 9-11, the Polish leadership negotiated with France for asylum for the government. On September 16, Polish-Romanian negotiations began on the transit of the Polish leadership to France, and on September 17, the government left the country. All this aggravated the chaos and undermined the defense capability of the Polish troops.

With the departure of the commander-in-chief from Warsaw, the activities of the high command were actually disorganized. Although the old fortress of Brest was intended for the command post of the commander-in-chief according to the strategic plan "Vskhud" in the event of a war with the Soviet Union, the fortress premises were completely unsuitable for the work of the General Staff. Telephone communication was organized only 12 hours after the arrival of the commander-in-chief in Brest, and then only with the Lublin army and the command of the 3rd corps district in Grodno, and later for a short time with the headquarters of the Narew group. The only radio station that arrived from Warsaw could not be used for a long time: there were no ciphers sent to Brest by rail. After a German air raid, this radio station, which, due to its huge size, could not even be put in shelter, was seriously damaged and began to work only for reception. Now, in order to communicate with the troops, the high command had to act according to the following scheme. By telegraph or telephone, the officers of the headquarters of the commander-in-chief contacted the Pinsk naval base, which had a shortwave radio station. From there

a radiogram was sent to the group of the headquarters of the Polish fleet in Warsaw. In turn, the sailors contacted Stakhevich's group, who sent a reply to Brest in the same way. As a result, the headquarters of the commander-in-chief turned

out to be inoperative. Under such conditions, the chief of the General Staff, Stakhevich, with a small group of officers, who remained in Warsaw, was supposed to practically direct the military operations. However, Stakhevich was afraid to make responsible decisions on his own and constantly turned to Brest for instructions, using for this purpose mainly liaison officers, who with great difficulty made their way in cars along roads clogged with refugees. The decisions made were hopelessly outdated and, if they reached the executors, they no longer corresponded to the situation. The division of the General Staff between Warsaw and Brest brought all its work into a chaotic state. For a long time it was not possible to agree on where, who and what troops would lead. The documents and office necessary for Stakhevich ended up in Brest. Stakhevich, in negotiations on September 7 with his deputy Yaklich, who was in Brest, said: "The work cannot continue like this. We are completely exhausted here. We have an absolute shortage of officers... We have no communication during the whole day because of the bombings, and only in the evening we can talk, which forces me to make decisions of great importance myself." A. Yaklich, in response, described the situation to Stakhevich: "We have been constantly searching for troops and expelling officers to restore communication ... There is a big farce with the internal organization in the Brest fortress, which I myself must liquidate. Constant air raids. In Brest, flight in all directions. The collapse of the administration sharply deepened the general crisis. The commanders began to act at their own peril and risk, at their own discretion, not knowing the intentions of the high command and neighbors. The Polish front gradually disintegrated into separate pockets. After the end

of the border battles, the command of Army Group North sought, first of all, to develop an offensive through the Vistula, Narew and Bug in order to prevent the stabilization of the Polish front. At the headquarters of the group, they now feared that the Polish troops, who had retreated beyond the Vistula and Narew, would be able to escape from German attacks further to the east. Therefore, on September 8, the group commander ordered the formations to quickly pursue the Poles from the front and at the same time try to cut off their escape route. The 4th Army was to "advance on the retreating enemy in

order to delay him", the 3rd Army was to capture the crossings across the Bug and then move south, to the Minsk Mazowiecki-Sedlec line, in order to block the enemy's retreat. The 19th motorized corps of General G. Guderian, transferred to the left flank of the 3rd Army, to which the 10th Panzer Division and the Brand group were subordinate, remained in the hands of the group commander and was now to advance on Sedlec and to the

east. However, on September 9, OKH, by its order, finally formulated a new task. "The enemy troops retreating beyond the Vistula must be destroyed by a double envelopment east of the Vistula ... On the eastern flank of Army Group North, it is necessary to conduct mobile forces in such a way that in the future it will be possible for them to interact with Army Group South east of the Bug. Army Group "South" destroys the enemy, still holding west of the Vistula, and further advance through the Vistula prevents the withdrawal of enemy forces to the east. With a strong right flank, it advances through the Upper and Middle San to envelop the enemy on the Lower San. In the future, it will advance in the general direction of Helm in the readiness of the right flank, if necessary, to also move through the upper reaches of the Bug. The offensive continued to develop. The 1st Army

Corps of the 3rd Army crossed the Narew near Pultusk, but on September 8, parts of the corps lay down on the Bug near Vyshk-vom, met by fire from the 1st and 41st Polish divisions. To the east, Vodriga's corps advanced from Rozhan through Ostrov-Mazowiecki to the crossings across the Bug near Brok. Here he had to overcome the courageous resistance of the right-flank units of the Polish 41st Infantry Division. Only with great difficulty did the cavalry brigade cross over to the south coast, which, however, could not develop success. General Guderian, contrary to the requirement of the army group to move strictly to the south, sought to develop the offensive to the southeast, in the direction of Brest. After a series of battles with the counterattacking Polish Suwalki Cavalry Brigade and at the crossings at Wizna, as well as after many misunderstandings caused by the poor organization of the crossing, the mobile group led by Guderian finally crossed the Narew, and its main forces moved along the eastern bank of the Bug, meeting only scattered resistance of the Polish detachments. It now deeply embraced the Polish groupings from the east, which continued to fight on the Bug and Narew. Meanwhile, the infantry formations of the 3rd Army, having crossed the Bug, advanced from the northeast towards Warsaw. At the same time, they carried out a deep round of the entire Warsaw region with two infantry divisions and the Kempf tank formation through Sedlec, occupied on September 11th.

Troops of the 4th Army were approaching Warsaw from the northwest. Its 2nd Army Corps, having crossed the Drwentsa River, occupied Serpts, Plock and went to Modlin, and the 3rd Army Corps, advancing after the retreating Polish units of the Pomezhe and Poznan armies, reached the line by September 11 Wlotjaavek-Kolo.

On the southern sector of the front, events developed more and more rapidly.

On September 6-7, at the headquarters of the "South" group, the impression was that the Polish troops west of the Vistula were already completely deprived of freedom of maneuver and were refusing to fight. Therefore, on September 7, all corps received the task of pursuing the Poles with the greatest march tension. The command of the army group was concentrating more and more efforts on the southern flank, with the aim of preventing the creation of a new Polish front on the Sana by rapid pursuit and at the same time facilitating the 8th and 10th Armies' difficult crossing over the Vistula, which they were to make in the coming days.

Fulfilling this order, the 14th Army advanced towards San on a wide front. Its left-flank 8th Army Corps crossed the Vistula at Opatovets and moved east. The 22nd motorized corps moved through Tarne with its mobile formations to Yaroslav, occupied on September 11th. Behind him advanced the infantry formations of the 17th Army Corps. On the right flank of the army, the 18th Army Corps, advancing from No-vy-Sonch, forced the San near Sanok and by September 11 reached the upper reaches of the Dniester.

The 10th Army moved more compactly, now having the task of breaking through with its three "pursuit groups" to the Vistula in the Pulawy-Gura Kalvaria sector. Already on September 6-7, air reconnaissance reported on the concentration of significant Polish forces south of Radom and north of Ilzha. These were detached units of the Prussian army and the Lublin army. On the basis of intelligence data, the tasks of the mobile troops were specified. The goal was to get to the Vistula crossings as soon as possible and occupy the escape routes of the newly discovered Polish grouping, while at the same time deeply enveloping it from the flanks.

To implement this plan, the 14th Motorized Corps was transferred on September 7 from the left flank of the 10th Army to the area south of Piotrkuv and moved through Opoczno to Radom. After heavy fighting, the 15th motorized corps bypassed the Ilzhi forest region from the east and on September 9 established contact east of Radom with units of the 14th motorized corps advancing on Deblin. The approaching units of the 10th Army surrounded the Polish grouping between Radom and Ilzha with concentric strikes. On September 9-12, fighting continued with the encircled Polish grouping. As a result, 65 thousand people were captured by the Germans, and 145 guns became trophies of the Wehrmacht. Meanwhile, the German 16th Motorized Corps, advancing from Tomaszow Mazowiecki north of Pilica, was moving freely to the northeast. Since there was no enemy in front of the 4th Panzer Division and a free highway to Warsaw opened up, it was given the task of breaking into the Polish capital and capturing the bridges across the Vistula. The pace of the march increased. The 1st and 4th Panzer Divisions were now moving unopposed. Soon they broke away from the common front to 70 km. The 1st Panzer Division captured the bridges at Gura Kalvaria. The 4th Panzer Division, having reached Warsaw on September 8, met stubborn resistance on its outskirts and stopped. All attempts to overcome the Polish defense were unsuccessful. The right-flank 7th Army Corps rushed south of Jendrzejew through Stakow to Sandomierz, which was occupied on September 11th.

Covering the left wing of the 10th Army, the 8th Army occupied Lodz and reached Skierniewice and Lowicz, its 10th Army Corps reached the river.

Bzura. Thus, by September 12, German troops reached the middle reaches of the Vistula already in a number of sectors, they crossed the Bug-Narev line, engulfing Warsaw from the east, and advanced to the San, forcing its upper reaches.

The order to organize the defense of Warsaw was given by the Minister of War on September 3 in connection with the emerging German breakthrough from the "Czestochowa gap". The written instructions from the command stated that the threat of a breakthrough by German tanks created the need to organize the defense of Warsaw from the south, prepare the defense of the bridges and, at the same time, take measures to destroy them if necessary. Two sections of defense were created on the Middle Vistula: the northern one - from Modlin to Deblin, the southern one - further to Sandomierz. The defense of Warsaw was prepared within the framework of the northern section, which, on the orders of the commander-in-chief, was headed by the former chief commandant of the border troops, General of the Brigade V. Chuma. Five battalions with artillery

were subordinate to him. The German breakthrough on the Warta near Sieradz on September 5 led the Polish high command to the idea that the threat to the capital did not arise from the south, but mainly from the southwest. It was necessary to immediately strengthen the garrison, which could be done only at the expense of the troops retreating from the west. Therefore, the next day, General Stakhevich demanded that the armies "Poznan" and "Help" send part of the forces to the capital and at the same time ordered the Plague "to defend the Warsaw bridges until the arrival of generals Kutsheba and Bortnovsky." The Warsaw garrison was reinforced by a total of six battalions with

artillery. These forces were barely enough even to organize the defense of the city west of the Vistula. But the threat was rapidly approaching from the east. It was necessary to think about organizing the defense of the eastern suburbs of Warsaw - Prague. By order of Plague, three more infantry regiments were formed to defend the eastern districts of the city. So gradually the Polish capital turned into an isolated bastion, to which enemy divisions approached from all sides.

At the initiative of the city president S. Stazhinsky,

on September 5, the organization of the so-called civil defense began, which was headed by Master Ya. Regulsky, who became the chief commandant of the city. At the call of Stazhinsky, thousands of Varsovians day and night in the suburbs, on the streets and squares of the city erected barricades and anti-tank barriers. Red Cross detachments, first aid stations, fire and sanitary detachments were created. A metropolitan committee of public mutual assistance was organized. For

sapper work, work battalions of the defense of Warsaw began to be created, which on September 12 received the name of a volunteer work brigade. In its ranks, there were about 6 thousand people, reduced to 22 companies. Each

quarter formed its own volunteer detachment. When there were not enough weapons, carpenters' axes, stonemasons' chisels and chisels, mechanics' tools, automobile springs, all iron bars that came to hand, even butcher's knives and kitchen knives impaled on sticks from panicles, went into action. Detachments of armed women and sa-nitar women were formed. Accelerated nursing courses were opened in all hospitals. Military workshops appeared in which women prepared lint and bandages. Secondary school students formed groups of couriers and "national battalions", which were responsible for bringing ammunition to the first line. At a meeting with the commander of the "Warsaw" army on September 15, the head of the city said that he could deliver any number of volunteers. For their armament, weapons were taken from non-combatant units, the wounded; some of the volunteers managed to arm. Thanks to the wide participation of the Varsovians, it was possible to prepare the capital for defense in a short time, to turn it into a strong fortified area.

The size of the garrison of the capital gradually increased due to the troops arriving in the city from the western regions of the country. Thus, according to data as of September 17, the strength of the garrison was: people - 17,825, horses - 3,670, rifles - 10,475, machine guns - 475, anti-tank guns - 34, 75-mm and 105-mm guns - 30. In Warsaw there were only 36 anti-aircraft guns and 33 tanks.

In organizational terms, the territory of the city was divided into two sections of defense - the western and eastern. The first included the city itself, located on the western bank of the Vistula; the second - a suburb of Warsaw - Prague on the eastern bank of the river. The western section consisted of three sub-sections, each of which had two or three battalion districts, bearing the names of the urban areas they defended ("Will", "Hunting", "Mokotow"). In addition, there were separate groups: the provision of bridges, the protection of the Vistula, the protection of the citadel.

To cover the Warsaw defensive area from the air, the Polish high command appointed an aviation brigade, which had 54 aircraft. Air defense artillery operated in the capital area until September 5, and then part of it was transferred to Brest to cover the new Rydz Smigly command post. Of course, in the face of the defeat of the Polish regular troops, the defense of the capital had no hope of success in the fight against a strong enemy. Nevertheless, the 20-day defense of the city is rightfully considered a heroic page in the struggle of the Polish people for independence.

Already in the first days of the war, air battles began over Warsaw. The Polish aviation brigade boldly entered into battles with the superior forces of German aviation. She suffered losses, but also caused damage to the enemy. So, on September 3, Polish pilots shot down two German planes and landed one, on the 5th - 9 planes, and on the 6th - 15. However, her success was limited to this. On September 6, in connection with the departure of Rydz-Smigly to Brest, the brigade was removed from the defense of Warsaw and transferred to Brest.

The capital lost its air cover. The battle for Warsaw

began on 8 September. At about 5 p.m., the 4th Panzer Division of the 10th German Army, advancing through Piotrkow, broke into the city from the southeast with its forward detachment. The tanks moved along the Gruets-coma highway and attacked the Okhota defensive area. Here they unexpectedly met active resistance. Very soon four tanks were knocked out. Two of them destroyed the detachments of volunteers. The next day at 7.45 the 4th Panzer Division again attacked the same area of Polish defense with 30 tanks, supported by artillery. Several tanks that managed to penetrate the street of the suburbs fell into traps dug by the inhabitants of the city the day before. Doused with gasoline, they were burned along with the crews. Two German light tanks broke into the city from the direction of Powonski and were attacked by a crowd that had left the houses.

Eyewitnesses testify that, despite the furious fire that the crews fired from machine guns, the tanks were literally buried under the mass of the townspeople who attacked them, defeated by the angry people, and the people sitting in them were killed by blows of knives and clubs. Two more German tank attacks on September 9 and attempts to break into the city on the 10th and on the night of the 11th also ended in failure for the Germans.

This was a big surprise for the German military command, which had not for a moment doubted the rapid fall of the Polish capital. Confidence was so complete that General Reichenau, having received the first reports on the battles of the 4th Panzer Division under the walls of the Polish capital, in an order issued on September 9, said: "The 4th Panzer Division, in accordance with the order, cleared the western part of Warsaw, which systematically fired on by strong Polish artillery of all calibers from the eastern bank of the Vistula. The general could not even imagine that the Poles would hold up his tanks and that these tanks would not fulfill his personal order to take the Polish capital. The message about the capture of Warsaw was immediately transmitted by radio and OKW ^ Subsequently, the commander of the German 4th Panzer Division Reinhardt, recalling the rapid breakthrough of his division, noted that "joy shone in the eyes of everyone," since now, on the eighth day of the war, the division will enter the capital of the enemy. But it turned out differently: on the outskirts, the tanks were met with heavy fire, barricades, anti-tank guns, which "blocked the road for the lead tanks." The division stopped. "Under these conditions," Reinhardt continues, "one could not even think of a breakthrough into the city ..." Assessing the strength

of the city's defenses

and the complexity of the situation in the battle over Bzura, the commander of Army Group South abandoned further attempts to take Warsaw on the move. For the siege of Warsaw, the 4th Panzer Division of the 10th Army was relieved on September 12 by the 31st Infantry Division.

On September 8, the Polish high command ordered the creation of the Warsaw army, at the head of which was placed General Rummel - in the recent past, the commander of the Lodz army. By decision of the High Command on September 10, Warsaw became a special independent defense area. As a result of the advance of the 3rd German Army through the Narew and the Bug to the south and the exit of its units to the eastern outskirts of the capital on September 13 and 14, the encirclement ring around Warsaw was closed from the east. From now on, the garrison could rely only on its own forces and resources.

In the meantime, in connection with the advance of the 3rd German Army in Eastern Poland and the threat of a deep bypass of the entire northern grouping of Polish troops, the Polish high command decided to concentrate as many forces as possible in the southeastern regions of the country, near the border of the allied, although not at war, Romania and here to continue resistance. It was in this spirit that the directive of the General Staff of September 10 was drafted. Having stated that the light mechanized units of the enemy disorganize the front of defense and do not allow "we to break away from the enemy and gather troops under the cover of the river. Vistula", the commander-in-chief pointed out: "My main goal is the possible concentration of all troops in the direction of Eastern Poland and ensuring connection with Romania." On the line of the river San-Sandomierz-Rawa-Ruska operates the Army Group of General Sosnkowski as part of the armies of Generals Fabrica and Schilling, troops arriving in Lvov and formed in Eastern Poland. Sosnkowski's Army Group must hold eastern Lesser Poland and the Romanian border. Piskor's army must defend along the Vistula from Sandomierz to the mouth of the Veps. The direction of a possible retreat is towards Tomaszow-Lubelski. Withdrawal from the Vistula-Vepsh line - by a separate order. My desire is that the army on this line endure until the group of Kutsheba breaks through Radom to Krasnik.

To the north, the army of General Pshedzimirsky retreats in the direction of Kalushin-Lukow-Radzyn-Podlyas-ki-Parchev-Tomaszow. The group of General Skvirchinsky, who fought in the Verbnik-Kamenka-Radom area, should be pulled back beyond the Vistula. The army group of General Domb-Bernatsky, as part of the armies of Generals Przedzimirsky and Mlot-Fialkovsky, was tasked with breaking away from the enemy and reaching the Kotsk-Brest region as quickly as possible. In the future, if necessary, withdraw to the Grubeshuv-Vladimir-Volynsky line. The army group of General Kutsheba strikes at the enemy in the Lodz region and makes his way through Radom to Krasnik681. A new defensive front was supposed to be created at the expense of the troops retreating beyond the Vistula and San in the southern and southeastern directions, as well as at the expense of reserve formations. From the north, the concentration of troops was supposed to be covered by units of the Lublin army.

The order of September 10 was the last general order of the Polish high command. After that, it left Brest and moved in the direction of Romanian territory, losing all control of the troops for several days. Very soon it became clear that it was not possible to implement a new solution. As the French representative at the Polish General Staff, General Armango, reported to Paris on September 10, "utter chaos reigns here. The main Polish command has almost no connection with the warring armies and large units ... It has absolutely no information about the progress

of the enemy, and even of the position of his own troops, is very incompletely or not at all informed. The General Staff broke up into two parts... The Polish army was actually defeated in the very first days<sup>682</sup>. Of course, knowing about the mood in Paris, the general exaggerated somewhat, but by mid-September the situation at the front did not allow the Poles to hope for victory.

The largest of the battles in central Poland was the Battle of Bzura, which took place west of Warsaw between September 9 and 18 between the Polish army "Poznan", part of the forces of the "Help" army on one side and formations of the German 8th and 10th armies - with another.

The area where the battle unfolded is bounded from the north by the Vistula River, from the south by its tributary Bzura, from the west and east by the cities of Kutno and Sokhachev. In this area and further to Warsaw, the troops of the Poznan army, which had not yet entered the battles, retreated from the threat of German flank coverage. The fact that the army retreated for more than a week when the enemy had already penetrated deeply into Polish territory formed the basis of the decision soon taken by the commander of the army, General Kutsheba, not only to move towards Warsaw, avoiding the enemy, but first to strike at the German 8th Army. The plan for this strike was formed contrary to the conclusions that the unfavorable balance of forces suggested, contrary to the direct prohibition of Rydz Smigly. The moral moment - the feeling of bitterness for the heavy setbacks and loss of the army / internal protest against the withdrawal without experiencing military happiness, the desire to answer the enemy blow for blow - apparently played a much greater role here than operational considerations and strict

staff calculations. The transition to the offensive of the Poznan army was facilitated by the situation in the Bzura area. It developed in connection with the miscalculation of the German command, which assumed that the Polish army was completely and everywhere defeated and would no longer be able to threaten with active countermeasures. The German 8th Army, after the end of the border battles, received the task of pursuing the Poles and breaking through to Lowicz, having the main grouping between Lodz and Bzura. Since the army did not have a neighbor in the north, this "run to Lovich" inevitably opened up its northern flank, which was threatened by the Polish army "Poznan", which was retreating at the same time to the east, but to the north, with those who joined it units of the "Help" army. The command of Army Group South, like the OKH, made a major mistake, believing that this Polish grouping, which had already been reported by aviation on September 7, was withdrawing to Warsaw and would not get involved in the battle, and that the Bzura River was sufficient cover for the northern flank. The Polish commanders on this sector of the front were guided by other considerations than those attributed to them by the Germans. As a result, the 8th Army came under a strong flank attack from the Poznan army, which caused a crisis that slowed down the operations of the left wing and the center of the 10th Army.

The plan of the commander of the army "Poznan" on September 7 pursued, according to him, a limited goal: part of the army's forces to strike from the Kutno region on Strykov, break the northern flank grouping of the 8th German army and thereby ensure the further withdrawal of the armies "Poznan" and "Help" to Warsaw. To strike, General Kutsheba created a task force under the command of General E. Knoll-Kovnatsky, consisting of three infantry divisions (25th, 17th and 14th) and a heavy artillery regiment (360 guns and 65 tanks). On September 8, the group deployed on the northern bank of the Bzura between Lenchitsy and Piontek on a 24 km front. Knoll's group went on the

offensive on the night of September 9, when German aviation could not pin it to the ground. An unexpected blow threw back parts of the Wehrmacht several kilometers south of Bzura. In the ensuing stubborn battles, the Polish troops fought heroically, especially near Lenchica, Piontek, Uniejow and Gelestynow. The day of the victory near Gelestynow was rightly called the great day of the 17th Polish division, which defeated units of the 17th German infantry division here. In subsequent battles on September 10 and 11, the German 30th Infantry Division lost up to 1,500 men and more than 30 guns. The cover of the northern flank of the 8th Army was now eliminated, the Polish group advanced 35 km south of Bzura (12 km left to Lodz), which created a threat to the rear of the German troops moving towards Warsaw. On September 11, the task force of General M. Boltuch (4th and 16th infantry divisions) entered the battle, which occupied Sobota and Lovich. The Poznan army was drawn into a difficult battle, the task of withdrawing to

Warsaw itself receded into the background. Overestimating the successes of the army "Poznan" during the battle over Bzura, the main Polish command in | | set a new task - instead of retreating to Warsaw, retreat to Radom and Krasnik. Since the cipher fell into the hands of the Germans, the General Staff transmitted the order to change the direction of withdrawal to the headquarters of the Poznan army in plain text in the form of a "slang" telegram: "The Poznan army should go to Wierzbicki for lunch and further south." The army headquarters knew that Wierzbicki's restaurant was located in Radom. But on September 11, the high command again canceled its decision and again ordered to move to Warsaw.



All this, which happened in just a day, was like a bolt from the blue for the Germans. Everything was mixed up in the central sector of the front. The German command began to withdraw troops from other sectors of the front and transfer them north of Lodz in order to strengthen their grouping. Initially, three infantry divisions from the 8th and 10th armies arrived here, and soon 16 German divisions were drawn in - a significant part of the forces of Army Group South. However, the command

to

The army group "South" was relieved that, having got involved in battles, the enemy would not be able to withdraw to the east. Formations of the 8th Army were torn from the south to Bzura, from the east, the 11th Army Corps (18th, 19th Infantry Divisions) of the 10th Army was deployed from Mszanow, from near Warsaw, the 1st and The 4th Panzer Divisions of the 16th Motorized Corps, replaced near Warsaw on September 16 by formations of the 15th Motorized Corps. From the northwest and across the Vistula near Plock, the Poles were attacked by the 3rd Army Corps, which on September 13 was subordinate to the 8th Army. In total, the German command concentrated 2,413 guns and 550 tanks against the enemy's 750 guns and 130 tanks.

On September 12, Kutsheba learned that the units of the Lodz army had already retreated to the northeast, so he ordered to stop the attacks and withdraw the troops behind the Bzura in order to transfer them to Lowicz and strike in the direction of Skierniewice. The next day, Knoll's group withdrew to the north, while the enemy withdrew to the south. On the morning of September 14, a group of General Bortnovsky (6th, 26th and 14th infantry divisions) crossed Bzura and attacked the enemy at Lowicz, but, having learned that the 4th German Panzer Division was moving from Warsaw to Bzura, Bortnovsky

withdrew troops behind river. On September 13, up to 200 Luftwaffe aircraft were thrown at the Polish columns behind Bzura. However, bad weather in the following days drastically complicated the use of aviation until 16 September. On September 14, German troops reached the lower reaches of the Bzura, only at the mouth of the river in the Kampinos forests along the Vistula remained unoccupied space. There, separate groups of Polish troops managed to break through to the east. Rejecting the enemy's repeated demands for surrender, the Polish soldiers

again and again went on the attack with the hope of breaking out of the ring. However, the numerical and technical superiority of the Germans was overwhelming. Since September 16, their planes have been continuously bombing and strafing Polish positions and areas of concentration of troops. Forests and villages burned. In the battles on Bzura, 820 Luftwaffe aircraft operated, which dropped 328 tons of bombs. The courage of the Polish soldiers in battle amazed the Germans, led them into confusion. The Polish cavalry, armed with pikes and sabers, repeatedly rushed into desperate attacks, and the infantry marched forward with songs and fell under the blows of artillery and aircraft. On September 16, at Lovich, the Poles once again tried to break through to the east, but were repulsed. / On September 17,

the 8th Army occupied Kutno and entered the Kutno-Lovich highway. The 11th Army Corps moved through the Bzura between Sokhachev and Lovich to the northwest. On September 19, units of the 16th Motorized Corps reached the banks of the Vistula at the mouth of the Bzura. At the same time, they crossed the Bzura and broke through the Polish defenses, dividing their grouping into separate groups. However, over the previous days, separate parts of the Polish grouping along the banks of the Vistula made their way into the Kampinos forests east of Warsaw, but here they were completely surrounded and dismembered. Only insignificant detachments broke through to Warsaw and Modlin. On September 19, the organized resistance of the Poles was broken, and at 22.00 on September 21, the last groups of Polish troops capitulated. During these battles, the Germans captured about 120 thousand prisoners, 320 guns, 130 aircraft and 40 tanks. After the battle over Bzura, the resistance of the Polish armed forces west of the Vistula was broken. German troops in a number of places crossed the Vistula. The main part of the territory of Western Poland up to the Vistula and San, with its large military and economic centers and a well-developed system of communications, was lost.

The situation on all fronts in mid-September was catastrophic for the Polish army. The Polish high command could no longer control the actions of the armed forces. The directive of September 10 failed to reach all headquarters in time. The formations acted at their own peril and risk, not knowing what was happening in other sectors of the front. The Polish army as an organized whole did not exist since the second half of September. At this time, the German command concentrated its efforts on encircling the Polish army in the eastern regions of the country.

In mid-September, Army Group North, in connection with the stretching of the front, held a new reassignment of troops. On September 13-14, the administration of the 4th Army transferred

3rd Army Corps to the 8th, and the 2nd Army Corps to the 3rd armies. From September 16, the 4th Army was subordinated to the 21st Army, 19th Motorized Corps and the Brand group, which operated northeast of the Bug. Meanwhile, formations of the 3rd Army reached the eastern bank of the Vistula from Modlin to the mouth of the Pilica River, occupying Minsk-Mazowiecki, Garwolin and Otwock, blocking the garrisons of Modlin and

Warsaw. On September 11-13, the remnants of the 18th Polish Infantry Division were surrounded and destroyed near Ostrov Mazowiecki. Formations of the 21st Army Corps occupied Belsk

on September 11, and Bialystok on September 15. In the deep

rear of Army Group North, Polish troops continued to defend Gdynia and Hel. In this area there were up to 18 thousand Polish soldiers, whose task was to defend the naval base of the Polish fleet. The units of the Ka-upish corps (207th Infantry Division and border units) and the Danzig unit acted against them - up to 38 thousand people in total. As early as September 3, this Polish grouping was cut off from the south, and by September 7, German units approached the outskirts of Gdynia. On September 8-13, the Poles managed to hold back enemy attacks under continuous bombing and shelling both from land and from the sea. However, on September 13, near Puck, the Germans managed to break through to the Gulf of Danzig, cutting off Hel from Gdynia. On the same day, the city was occupied, but the Poles held out in the area of the military port until September 19. On this day, having exhausted all the ammunition, the commander of the defense, Colonel S. Dombek, gave the order to stop the resistance. He himself shot himself. Now, only on the Hel Spit, the Poles continued to resist. While the 3rd Army was approaching Warsaw from the northeast, the 19th Motorized Corps launched an offensive against Brest. Attacking the

eastern bank of the Bug, Guderian's tank units occupied Vy-soko-Litovsk on September 12. On the afternoon of September 14, the 19th motorized corps occupied Brest. A detachment of General K. Plisovsky remained in the Brest Fortress. On September 15, the Germans stormed the fortress from the side of the city, but, having reached the gates of the citadel, they were repulsed. On the morning of September 16, artillery shelling and bombing of the fortress began. At 10 am, a new assault began, as a result of which part of the ramparts was captured, but the inability of the German infantrymen to advance behind the artillery barrage did not allow them to break into the fortress. Most of the fortress defenders were wounded or died, so on the night of September 17, the remnants of the garrison left the citadel across the bridge towards Terespol on the western bank of the Bug. Only in the morning did German intelligence establish that the fortress had been abandoned by the enemy and occupied it<sup>683</sup>.

On September 15, Bock ordered the commander of the 4th Army to organize an offensive to the east with the immediate task of reaching the Volkovysk-Grodno line (150 km from the Soviet border). The 19th motorized corps was tasked with "one motorized and one tank division to advance to Vlodava, Kovel. One motorized division, reinforced by a tank unit, was subordinate to the 4th Army in order to reach the Baranovichi-Slonim line through Kobrin, Pruzhany (50 km from the Soviet border). Accordingly, the 2nd motorized division moved to Kobrin, and the 3rd tank division to Vlodava, which it occupied on September 16th. The forward detachments reached Lyuboml. Parts of the 22nd motorized corps also approached here from the south.

Further south on the Vistula, units of the 14th Army Corps of the 10th Army occupied bridgeheads near Deblin and Pulaw. The right-flank 4th Army Corps crossed the Vistula at Opole and Annopol and, having occupied Krasnik, moved towards Lublin. The 7th Army Corps occupied Sandomierz, crossed the Vistula and San and moved east. Formations of the 14th Army began to turn to the northeast. The mobile divisions of the 22nd motorized corps from the bridgehead at Yavorov rushed through Toma-shuv-Lyubelsky, occupied on September 13, to Zamosc and through Rava-Ruska to Grubeshuv and Vladimir-Volynsky, which were occupied by advanced detachments on September 16. On the same day, formations of the 22nd motorized corps were again turned to the south-west in the direction of Rava-Russkaya-Lvov. Following them, the San were forced by the divisions of the 17th Army Corps. To the north, formations of the 8th Army Corps crossed the river, colliding near Tarnograd with the Polish operational group Piskor. On September 14, divisions of the 18th Army Corps occupied Przemysl and Sambir and moved towards Lvov. On September 12, the 4th

light infantry division approached Lvov from Sambor. The next day, the Germans attacked the city and occupied the main station. However, the Polish defense held out. Nevertheless, in the evening summary, the city's defense command noted that "morale, with the exception of individual soldiers, is poor due to the large superiority of the enemy." But two days of successful fighting, which forced the Germans to leave the city, led to the fact that the morale of the troops improved<sup>684</sup>. From September 15

The 4th light infantry division began to withdraw north to the Rava-Russkaya area, but units of the 1st mountain infantry division approached from the south. The city was blocked from the north by units of the 4th light infantry division, from the west by the 45th infantry division, from the south by the 1st mountain infantry division.

By September 16, the troops advancing from the north and south, respectively, of the 4th and 14th armies reached the line Osovets-Bialystok-Belsk-Kamenets-Litovsk-Brest-Litovsk-Vlodava-Vladimir-Volynsky-Zamosc-Lvov-Sambir, and the troops of the 10th Army, having crossed the Vistula, approached Lublin from the southwest. On this line, 150-250 km away from the border of the Soviet Union, there were 20 German divisions, from

there are 4 tank, 2 motorized and light and 14 infantry. In Army Group North, these were the 3rd, 10th Panzer, 20th, 2nd Motorized, 21st, 23rd, 206th Infantry and Brand Group, and in Army Group South "- 2nd, 5th tank, 7th, 57th, 44th, 45th, 28th, 8th, 27th, 68th infantry, 1st, 2nd I mountain infantry divisions. Naturally, the German command was not going to stop the advance of the troops, especially since there was no organized Polish front in front of them. Since the rate of advance of German tank and motorized groups at that time reached 25-30 km per day, they could occupy the whole of Eastern Poland (Western Ukraine and Western Belarus) within 4-8 days, that is, by September 21-25. **The last battles** However, at 02:00 on September 17, the German command was

informed of  
the entry of the

Red Army into Poland and at 07:00 ordered its troops to "stop at the Skole-Lvov-Vladimir-Volynsky-Brest-Bialystok" line685 . But the main body of the German troops had yet to reach this line, so they continued to advance. 17—

On September 19, formations of the 4th Army Corps of the 10th Army reached the western bank of the river. Veps, having occupied Lublin on September 18, and the right-flank units entered Chelm. The 7th and 8th Army Corps of the 14th Army (720 guns and 70 tanks) surrounded the Piskor task force (130 guns and 30 tanks) between Zamoż and Tomaszów Lubelski and on September 20 forced it to capitulate. The 17th and 18th army corps reached the Rava-Ruska-Lvov line, encircling the remnants of the Malopolsk army near Zhovkva, which capitulated on September 19. Formations of the 22nd Motorized Corps were slowly withdrawing to Sambor, where the 5th Panzer Division had already arrived. By September 19, these troops occupied Borislav and Stry. This was the last advance of the Wehrmacht to the east. On September 19, by order of the OKH, the troops were stopped at the lines

reached. The defeat of the Polish army by the Wehrmacht, the introduction of Soviet troops into Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, and the achievement of agreements between Moscow and Berlin on the fate of Polish territories, which will be described in detail below, allowed the German command to clarify the immediate military tasks both in the East and in the West. On September 25, 1939, OKW Directive No. 4 was issued:

**"1. The final political formalization of the former Polish territory between demarcation line and border of the Reich has not yet been produced.**

**After the completion of the battles for Warsaw and Modlin, provide the demarcation line along its entire length with formations of reduced combat capability.**

**The forces of the ground forces and aviation, necessary for the rapid breaking of the still ongoing Polish resistance behind the demarcation line (San-Vistula-Narew-Pisa), should be left in the east ... 2. The decision as to whether**

**to capture Modlin and Warsaw to the west Wislyup to 3.10. by a general offensive, I reserve for myself, depending on the results of private operations to destroy the enemy. However, measures to prepare for such an offensive should be taken.**

**3. Stop now all movement of refugees from east to west across the demarcation line, with the exception of Volksdeutsche and Ukrainian activists.**

**4. The decision on the further conduct of the war will be taken as soon as possible. Until then, the measures taken by the branches of the armed forces, both in terms of organization and in the field of armament, should not hinder the adoption of possible solutions. It should be possible to conduct an offensive war in the west at any moment. To keep in East Prussia ready forces sufficient to quickly capture Lithuania, even in the event of its armed resistance.**

**5. a) With regard to actions on land, the directives for the conduct of war in the West remain in force for the time being. b) At sea, the previous trade war restrictions are lifted; conduct a naval war both against France and against England in accordance with the provision on the seizure of trophy property. Further, the**

**following are permitted: Attack on French warships and warplanes, on French merchant ships in convoy, on all enemy transports; the use of mines off the North African coast (ports of loading). The conduct of an economic war**

**by military aviation formations in accordance with the regulation on seizure of trophy property.**

**Attack on passenger steamers, or on large ships which, along with goods, obviously carry a large number of passengers, is not allowed. c) For aerial reconnaissance in the west, the previous restrictions remain. Overflight of the empire's borders is permitted only for close reconnaissance, reconnaissance of the battlefield, as well as for attacking fire-correcting aircraft and balloons. Aviation can be used in Helgoland Bay and in the mined West area, as well as in direct support of naval operations against British or French ships.**

**Regarding the conduct of long-range reconnaissance, the order will follow separately. 6. From now on, only the following names will be used for submarine warfare: for submarine warfare conducted in accordance with the provisions on the seizure of trophy property - trade war; ÿ for unrestricted submarine warfare, a naval blockade of England. 7. Submarine attacks on British merchant ships, accurately identified as armed, to be carried out without prior warning**

**686**

NIA "Now in Poland, the German command had to break the last centers of organized resistance of the encircled Polish garrisons in Warsaw, Modlin and Hel. During the battle over Bzura, the activity of German artillery and aviation against Warsaw weakened, which eased the situation in the city. As early as September 12, Hitler, who arrived in the Warsaw region, at a conference with Goering and Keitel, demanded that the city be subjected to merciless air bombardment and artillery fire. At the same time, the German command tried to undermine the defense of the Polish capital from the inside. On September 15, leaflets were dropped on the city, accusing the population of Warsaw of "waging a war of freemen" and thereby ... violating international law. The city was ordered to surrender within 12 hours without a fight. If this requirement was not met, then the civilian population received 12 hours to leave the city along the highway to Sedlec and Garwolin. After this time, the appeal said, "the whole area of Warsaw will become a military area with all the ensuing consequences."

On September 16, air and ground strikes resumed. During that day alone, more than 5,000 shells were fired at the city. The Old Town and Palace Square areas were heavily bombed. In the following days, fire strikes were inflicted on new and new areas of the capital. The water and gas supply was cut off. Putting out the fires became more and more difficult. However, the resistance and enthusiasm of the defenders of Warsaw did not weaken, the German parliamentarians were not accepted. The German command came to the conclusion that the only way to break the defense of the Polish capital was by suppressing it with a mass of troops, equipment, and strongest air strikes. In mid-September, the OKH and the headquarters of the air force begin preparations for a general assault. However, while the battle over Bzura continued, it was difficult to do this, and on the evening of September 16, Hitler postponed the assault on the city, scheduled for the morning of September 17<sup>687</sup>. On the afternoon of September 17, the command of the army "Warsaw" offered the enemy to start negotiations on the evacuation of the civilian population, but Hitler, referring to the fact that the ultimatum had expired, rejected this request. At the same time, the Poles were told that the German command was ready to negotiate the surrender of the garrison. On September 19, the commander of the 8th Army gave the order to prepare a general assault, which was supposed to be completed by September 25. On September 20, 620 Luftwaffe

aircraft were used against Warsaw, and the next day Goering ordered the main forces of the 1st and 4th air fleets to be concentrated against the Polish capital. On the night of September 22, the Germans began artillery and aviation preparations for the final assault. A flurry of shells and bombs hit the outer fortifications and strategic points of the city. Two days later, the power plants and the telephone network were completely disabled, the radio went silent. The city plunged into darkness. On September 24, the German command decided not to let the refugees out of the city in order to prevent "the Polish garrison from fighting in the city itself using all means"<sup>688</sup>. On September 25, 1,150 Luftwaffe aircraft bombed the city using incendiary bombs. Wave after wave of German bombers attacked residential areas; encountering almost no opposition, they methodically destroyed the city. Hospitals, hospitals were overflowing with the wounded. The dead were buried in city squares and vegetable gardens. The lack of water made it impossible to fight fires. Warsaw was a sea of flames. In total, the Polish capital was

5,818 tons of bombs were dropped, and in total, the Luftwaffe dropped 19,589 tons of bombs on Poland, about the same amount was dropped on England in 1941.<sup>689</sup>

On September 26, German troops began shelling the city itself. At the same time, a general assault began. The strike on the western sector of defense was repulsed by units of the 40th and 41st Polish infantry regiments. Fighting also broke out in other sectors of the defense. They took on the most violent character in Chernyakhov and Zholibozh. During the fighting on September 25-26, the troops of the 13th Army Corps broke through both lines of external fortifications, and units of the 11th Corps captured the first line of forts. At 18.00, the Polish command, through truce, asked the command of the Wehrmacht to provide a 24-hour truce for the withdrawal of the civilian population from the city. This request was refused, and the Poles were required to send an officer to negotiate the surrender of the garrison. The shelling of the city continued.

Despite the fact that the defense of the capital became a matter of national honor, the Polish command, given the lack of ammunition, food, water and medicine, came to the conclusion that the possibilities of defense had been exhausted. Therefore, on the morning of September 27, it agreed to start negotiations, and at 13.15 on September 28, the act of capitulation of Warsaw was signed. A significant part of the troops and residents of the capital did not support the decision of the authorities to stop the struggle and surrender the city. Some officers committed suicide, not wanting to give up. Soldiers and entire units ignored the order to hand over their weapons to special points. They buried or destroyed their weapons so that they would not fall into the hands of the enemy. During the defense of Warsaw,

according to Polish data, about 5,000 Polish soldiers were killed, and about 16,000 were wounded. Among the civilian population, about 25 thousand people were killed, about 50 thousand were injured. 5031 officers, 97,425 non-commissioned officers and privates were taken prisoner. Up to 20% of the city's buildings were destroyed, including the national shrine - the Royal Castle. On the evening of September 29, the surrender of the Warsaw garrison began, and on the morning of October 1, the German 10th Infantry Division entered it, the commander of which, General Kochenhausen, became the commandant of the city. Prague was occupied by units of the 1st Army Corps of the 3rd Army. On October 2, in Warsaw, in the presence of Hitler, a Wehrmacht victory parade took place. At the same time, German troops

launched attacks against Modlin on September 18. 550 aircraft were thrown at the city, artillery was widely used, ground units stormed the fortifications. However, the Poles not only repelled the attacks, but on September 19 they themselves launched a sortie near Novy Dvor. On September 22, the city was cut off from the south and from Warsaw by formations of the 15th motorized corps. On September 24, systematic artillery and aviation preparations for the assault on Modlin began. The lack of ammunition, food and medicine forced the commander of the garrison, General Tomme, to capitulate on September 29. About 30 thousand Polish soldiers were taken prisoner.

The fighting on the Hel Spit resumed on September 29, when the German troops launched attacks on the Polish fortifications. By October 1, they managed to break through several lines and take about 1/3 of the spit. Having exhausted the possibilities of resistance, the Polish garrison of Heli, consisting of almost 4.5 thousand people, led by Rear Admiral Yu. Un-rug, stopped resistance on October 2.

The last major clash between German and Polish troops was the fighting north of Kotsk on October 2-6. The operational group "Polesie", created on September 9 and later withdrawn from the Pripyat basin, was operating here, consisting of the 50th, 60th infantry divisions, the combined cavalry division, the remnants of the Podlaska cavalry brigade and the 13th training air squadron under the command of General F. Kleeberg. Moving away from the Soviet troops through Vlodava, Kleeberg decided to move to the aid of Warsaw. However, having received information about the capitulation of the capital's garrison, the general turned his units to Deblin, intending to seize ammunition and food depots there to continue partisan operations against the Germans. On October 2, northeast of Kock, the Poles encountered the 13th German motorized division. On the morning of October 3, Kleeberg attacked the enemy, but the lack of shells forced him to withdraw and try to break away from the enemy. The Germans moved to help their 29th motorized division, which, acting from the west, was supposed to help the 13th division attack the Poles from the southeast. Kleeberg decided to break up the 13th division before the 29th approached, and on October 5 the Poles attacked again. The Polish cavalry managed to break through the left wing of the Germans and go behind their lines, but in the midst of the battle, the Poles ran out of ammunition. Therefore, on the morning of October 6, the Kleeberg group laid down their arms.

Thus ended the Polish campaign of the Wehrmacht, and the German command got the opportunity transfer the main forces of the ground forces to the Western Front against France. **WAR FROM THE EAST**

Moscow closely followed the developments in Europe, hoping to use them in its own interests, which in Eastern Europe were secured by an agreement with Germany. Germanic

the leadership, recognizing part of this region as a Soviet sphere of interest, apparently believed that. The USSR uses troops to occupy it, which also met German interests, since in Berlin they emphasized the Soviet-German "friendship" in every possible way, trying to keep England and France from interfering in the German-Polish conflict. The German Foreign Ministry, concerned about rumors about the withdrawal of Red Army units from the Polish border, on August 27 instructed its embassy in Moscow to <sup>691</sup> . Fulfilling clarify this issue. This order, the German ambassador F.V. von Schulenburg on August 29 asked Molotov whether such rumors were true, and conveyed Berlin's wish that they be refuted in the press. Molotov inquired whether the German government believed such rumours, and after Schulenburg's negative reply, he agreed to give a refutation and stressed the seriousness with which the Soviet government took the non-aggression pact . On August 30, a TASS refutation appeared in the Soviet press, which stated that "in view of the aggravation of the situation in the eastern regions of Europe and in view of the possibility of all sorts of surprises, the Soviet command decided to strengthen the numerical strength of the garrisons of the western

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<sup>693</sup> USSR " German embassy in Moscow G. Hilger and announced the beginning of the war with Poland, the annexation of Danzig to Germany and conveyed the request of the Chief of the General Staff of the German Air Force that the radio station in Minsk, in its free time from broadcasts, transmit a continuous line for urgent aeronautical experiments interspersed with the call signs "Richard Wilhelm 1.0", and besides, during the broadcasts of his program, the word "Minsk" is often used whenever possible. The Soviet side agreed to transmit only the word "Minsk", which was used by the Luftwaffe as <sup>694</sup> . On Shkvartsev. September 3, the credentials of the Soviet ambassador to the German radio beacon A.A. At the ceremony, Shkvartsev and Hitler assured each other on behalf of their countries that they would fulfill their obligations under the non-aggression pact . On the same day, the German embassy in Moscow received an assignment from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, J. Ribbentrop, to probe the intentions of the USSR regarding the possible entry of the Red Army into Poland<sup>696</sup> . To this request, Molotov replied on September 5 that the Soviet government agreed that at the appropriate time it would "definitely have to ... start concrete actions. But we believe that this moment is not yet ripe", and "haste can spoil the matter and facilitate the rallying of opponents"<sup>697</sup> . The attitude of the

Soviet leadership to the outbreak of war in Europe was clearly expressed by I.V. Stalin on September 7, 1939 in

a conversation with the leadership of the Comintern. In his opinion, "a war is going on between two groups of capitalist countries (poor and rich in terms of colonies, raw materials, etc.) for the redivision of the world, for dominance over the world! We don't mind if they fight well and weaken each other. Not bad if the position of the richest capitalist countries (especially England) is shaken by the hands of Germany. Hitler, without realizing it and not wanting it, upsets and undermines the capitalist system... We can maneuver, push one side against the other, so that we can better tear ourselves apart. The non-aggression pact helps Germany to some extent. The next moment is . Germany also received more tangible assistance. September <sup>698</sup> to push the other side" <sup>4th</sup> everyone

German ships in the North Atlantic were ordered "to proceed to Murmansk, keeping as much northerly as possible"<sup>699</sup> . On September 6, the German Foreign Ministry reported to Moscow: "We intend to continue to send German merchant ships to Murmansk and expect the Soviet government to facilitate the unloading, loading and transportation of goods by rail to Leningrad, where German ships will call for loading."

On September 8, Moscow gave permission for German ships to enter Murmansk and guaranteed the transportation of goods to Leningrad<sup>700</sup> . In total, in the first 17 days of September, 18 German ships found <sup>701</sup> shelters in the Soviet port .

Describing Poland as a fascist state oppressing other nationalities, Stalin declared that "the destruction of this state under present conditions would mean one less bourgeois fascist state! What would be bad if, as a result of the defeat of Poland, we spread the socialist system to new territories and populations ? Accordingly, on September 8-9, the foreign Communist Parties also received a directive from the ECCI, which noted that "the real war is imperialist, in which the bourgeoisie of all the belligerent states are equally guilty." Therefore, "neither the working class, nor even the communist parties" can support this war. Moreover, "the international proletariat cannot under any circumstances defend fascist Poland, which has rejected the aid of the Soviet Union, which is oppressing other nationalities"<sup>703</sup> . Accordingly, contrary to the opinion

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State Rifle Divisions	5 850 1	•from 1		from	•from t		1	T	T	
	6 500 1	1	1	1	T	1	1	T	t "ngo	
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Rifle Corps Military Districts	1	ST	1	?from	T	2(3) "OSP '1 30(48)				
Districts		ZakVO UrVO SAVO Siberian Military District ZabVO 2nd OKA 1st OKA 1st AG Total								

it was supposed to increase the striking force of the infantry core in rifle divisions, to increase the number corps artillery and RGK artillery, transferring it from triple to double deployment. Should have reduce the number of service and rear units and institutions. Staff strength of the Red army was set at 2265 thousand people711 .

At the same time, the Soviet military command, given the likelihood of an early use of the Red army, decided to check the readiness of the border strip in the West for the concentration and deployment troops. On August 4, the chiefs of staff of the LVO, KalVO, BOVO and KOVO received the directive of the General Staff No. 16454 ss / s, according to which "in the period from August 15 to September 1, 1939, it is necessary to produce reconnaissance under the following program:

1. Check unloading stations (unloading device of stations, number of tracks, dead ends, stock of rails and sleepers for unloading operations, throughput capacity of the station).
  2. Conduct reconnaissance of routes from the unloading station to the collection area (weekends paths, bridges and defile, camouflage conditions). In the collection area: check the availability of potable water, accommodation facilities, means of communication and availability of roads.
  3. Reconnoitre routes from assembly areas to concentration areas and deployment, paying special attention to units advanced to the State Border in marching order.
  - In the area of concentration: check the availability of drinking water, accommodation options, conditions camouflage, the possibility of using permanent telegraph wires of Narkomsvyazi, the presence roads and their quality.
  - army headquarters and corps headquarters (location conditions, provision of permanent means of communication, the possibility of transporting field means of communication, the availability of routes, the conditions for camouflage and anti-tank defense). Create a placement plan.
  5. Check the communication centers at the locations of the headquarters and in the areas of assembly and concentration (equipment, availability of wires, availability of specialists, time required for establishing communication with individual points, measures to strengthen existing means of communication).
  6. Check the airfields, bases and their condition and the possibility of redeployment.
  7. Conduct reconnaissance of supply stations (availability of access roads and means of communication, availability of storage facilities and their capacity, the possibility of additional expansion of stations supply, conditions for the placement of rear institutions). Make diagrams of supply stations and project for the location of sanitary and veterinary institutions at supply stations and in hospital bases.
  8. Reconnoiter the unpaved sections of the supply and evacuation routes.
  9. Check the availability and storage conditions of food supplies, ammunition and fuel and lubricants in the warehouses of the district (mobility readiness and the possibility of warehouses, the availability access roads, air defense).
  10. Check the production capacity of local bakeries and bakeries.
- I entrust the overall direction of the reconnaissance to you.
- For the production of reconnaissance, involve only the command staff who took part in developing the plan.
- In exceptional cases, as consultants, it is allowed to attract the required number of specialists.



**Conduct reconnaissance under the guise of reconnaissance for exercises, in no case disclosing their actual purpose ... Send reconnaissance materials with your conclusions to the General Staff of the Red Army by September 20, 1939.** <sup>712</sup> . However, it turned out that these materials were needed

earlier. In connection with the outbreak of the German-Polish war, from

20:00 on September 2, a regime of enhanced security was

introduced on the Soviet-Polish border. According to the instructions of the head of the Border Troops of the Belarusian District No. 1720, all border detachments were put on combat marching readiness<sup>713</sup> . On September 3, the People's Commissar of Defense asked the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR to approve the delay in the dismissal of Red Army soldiers and junior commanders for 1 month in the troops of the JIBO, MVO, KalVO, BOVO, KOVO and HVO (total 310,632 people) and the call for training camps assigned to the units Air Defense in JIBO, KalVO, BOVO and KOVO (total 26,014 people)<sup>714</sup> . Having received the consent of the government, the people's commissar of defense issued an appropriate order on September 4.

The development of the international situation in early September 1939 led the Soviet leadership to decide to carry out a partial mobilization of the Red Army, and on September 6, at about 23-24 hours in seven military districts, a directive from the People's Commissar of Defense to conduct "Large training camps" (BUS) was received . According to the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 2/1/50698 dated

On May 20, 1939, the name BUS was an encrypted designation for covert mobilization. The implementation of the BUS according to the letter "A" meant that there was a deployment of individual units that had a readiness period of up to 10 days, with rears in wartime states. Spare parts and formations of civilian departments were not raised by the BUS. The mobilization itself took place in secrecy .

BUS started on the morning of September 7 and was not entirely organized, with a delay of 2-3 days Decree of the Defense Committee (KO) No. 210 of July 21, 1939, and a plan for resupplying the Red Army with clothing allowances, approved by Decree No. 50ss of March 3, 1939. In the districts, it was proposed to unbook mobilization stocks of food and bread forage. On the same day, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, Molotov, sent a telegram to the chairmen of the Council of People's Commissars of the SSR, the ASSR and the regional executive committees, in which he reported that "the military units of the LVO, MVO, KalVO, OrVO, BOVO, KOVO, HVO attract assigned staff, vehicles, horses and convoy The call is made strictly according to agendas without publication. Provide all possible assistance"<sup>717</sup> . In addition to purely military preparations, appropriate measures were also taken through the political agencies of the Red Army. On September 9, it was decided to increase the circulation of the Red Army newspapers in the districts that conducted the BUS, and the central newspapers for distribution in the army<sup>718</sup> . On September 10, the people's commissar of defense asked that 50% of the rubber reserves (about 8,000 sets) be unbooked in the military districts that carried out the bus, to provide vehicles coming from the national economy .

. By the Decree of KO No. 334ss / s of September 12, from 18.00 of this day, a military schedule was put into effect on the railways of the European part of the country to carry out military transportation on the bus. Civilian transportation was reduced, the railways received 500,000 tons of coal reserves, and a number of railways were appointed authorized SNKs to unload cargo. From September 8 to September 16, 2,888 military echelons were loaded (of which 972 were for September 14-16), of which 2,058 arrived at their destination and were

unloaded, and out of the remaining 830, 443 were already on the railways, where they were supposed to be unloaded<sup>720</sup> . Nevertheless, the military schedule was disrupted, and the railways worked unsatisfactorily<sup>721</sup> . By resolution No. 338ss of September 17, the NKVD railway guards in 7 military districts were transferred to a wartime position "to ensure the smooth operation of the railways"<sup>722</sup> . On September 16, the People's Commissar of Defense requested that mobilization stocks be released at 275 railway property bases to ensure the restoration of railways in the theater of operations. In total, the directorates of 22 rifle, 5 cavalry and 3 tank corps, 98 rifle and 14 cavalry divisions, 28 tank, 3 motorized rifle and machine gun and 1 airborne brigades (Table 28)<sup>724</sup> . 2,610,136 people were called up (Table <sup>723</sup>).

29), who on September 22, 1939, by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 177 of September 23, were declared mobilized "until further notice"<sup>725</sup> . The troops also received 634,000 horses, 117,439 vehicles and 18,900 tractors<sup>726</sup> .

ORVO - -	o\ al	1 1 1
HVO MF (N	1515	1 1 1
MVO <N (N	1212	SP SP
KOVO o \ up t ~	30237	—
BATTLE OS 40 (N -	24186	OS OO "H
KalVO <N HF	Tf Tf	--1
LVO "P Tf   - Corps:	18171	.861

rifle cavalry tank Divisions: rifle cavalry Brigades: tank mo

Table 29 Number of reservists called up for BUS727

District Chiefs Junior Commanders Enlisted Personnel Total			
LVO 25 306 325 311	90001	210004	
BOVO 15 074	37 006	327 987	380 067
KOVO 32 428	47 969	575 974	656 371
CalVO 6 249	17 939	138 662	162 850
MVO 38 359	115831	270 392	424 632
ORVO 8,489	19 922	191 493	219904
HVO 26,555	43 642	342 241	412438
SKVO — -		15 494	15 494
UrVO — - PriVO — -		7817	7817
Total 152,460 372,360		5 252	5 252
		2 085 316	2610136

At the same time, according to the decree} SNK No. 1348-268ss of September 2, 1939 from September 5 it was necessary to start another call for active military service for the troops of the Far East and 1 thousand people for each newly formed division, and from September 15 for all other districts, about than what was reported in the newspapers . In total, 1,076 thousand soldiers were drafted into the Red Army until December 31, 1939. man729. In addition, under the new Universal Conscription Act of

On September 1, 1939, the term of service of 190 thousand conscripts of 1937 was extended for 1 year. As a result the payroll of the Red Army increased from 1,910,477 people on February 21 to 5,289,400 people (out of of them 659 thousand recruits) as of September 20, 1939730 Normalization of the situation on the western borders of the USSR allowed on September 29 to start reducing the size of the Red Army, and by November 25, 1412 978 people731 . Accordingly, by November 19, 38,780 were returned from the Red Army to the national economy. vehicles and 5,727 tractors732 .

At the same time, on September 11, on the basis of BOVO and KOVO, departments were formed and deployed Belarusian (commander - commander of the 2nd rank M.P. Kovalev) and Ukrainian (commander - commander of the 1st rank S.K. Timoshenko) fronts733 . Vitebsk, Minsk and Bobruisk army groups BOVO were deployed on September 15, 1939, respectively, in the 3rd (commander - commander V.I. Kuznetsov), 11th (commander - division commander N.V. Medvedev) and 4th (commander - division commander V.I. Chuiikov) army. In addition, according to the order of the General Staff of September 9, a department was separated from the MVO department 10th Army (commander - commander I.G. Zakharkin), transferred to the Belorussian Front, where it relocated on September 11-15, and as part of the front, using personnel of the KalVO Department, the Cavalry-Mechanized Group (KMG) was created (commander - commander V.I. Boldin).

In KOVO, the procedure for renaming army groups took longer. So, Zhytomyr AG (commander - division commander I.G. Sovetnikov) was renamed Shepetovskaya on September 16, from September 18 - to the Northern and from September 28 - to the 5th Army. Vinnitsa AG (commander - commander F.I. Golikov) from 16 September became Volochisk, from September 24 - Eastern, and from September 28 - the 6th Army. Cavalry AG (commander - commander of the 2nd rank I.V. Tyulenev) from September 16 became known as Kamenetz Podolskaya, from September 20 - South, and from September 24 - the 12th Army, which, in turn, was from 28 September again divided into the 12th Army and the Cavalry AG. Did not participate in the Polish campaign The Odessa AG was renamed the 13th Army734 . In what follows, we will denote these unions as

according to their numbering. The troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts on September 7-15 basically completed their mobilization and concentrated in their starting areas near the border with Poland.

On September 8, the German leadership, misled by the report of the commander of the 4th Panzer Division, announced the capture of Warsaw. The German embassy in Moscow received the following telephone message from Molotov: "I have received your message about the entry of German troops into Warsaw. Please pass on. From 735 my congratulations and greetings to the German government Berlin to Moscow was called "Soviet military attaché commander M.A. Purkaev for a report on the situation in Poland. On September 9, Ribbentrop sent Schulenburg an order to resume talks "with Molotov regarding the military intentions of the Soviet government" in Poland. On the same day, Molotov replied to Schulenburg's sounding that "Soviet military operations will begin within the next few days"737.

On September 9, People's Commissar of Defense and Chief of the General Staff Army Commander 1st Rank B.M. Shaposhnikov signed orders No. 16633 to the Military Council of the BOVO and No. 16634 to the Military Council of

the KOVO, according to which it was necessary "by the end of September 11, 1939, to secretly concentrate and be ready for a decisive offensive with the aim of defeating the opposing enemy troops with a lightning strike." The troops of the Belorussian Front received the following tasks. The 3rd Army was supposed to "throw back the opposing enemy troops from the Latvian border, act in the general direction at st. Sventsyany", which should have been mastered by the end of September 13th. "In the future, keep in mind the mastery of Vilna." The 11th Army should "break through the enemy front with a powerful blow and advance in the direction of Oshmyany, Lida and, by the end of September 13, reach the Molodechno-Volozhin front, by the end of September 14, capture the Oshmyany, Ilye area. In the future, keep in mind to assist the Polotsk group in capturing the city of Vilna, and the rest of the forces to attack the city of Grodno. KMG received the task of "destroying them with a powerful blow to the enemy troops and resolutely advancing in the direction of Novogrudok, Volkovysk and, by the end of September 13, reach the Delyatichi, Turets front; by the end of September 14, reach the river. Molchad on the site from its mouth to Molchad cape. In the future, keep in mind the attack on Volkovysk with a barrier against the city of Baranovichi.

The 4th Army should "act in the direction of the city of Baranovichi and, by the end of September 13, reach the front of Snov, Zhilichi."

The troops of the Ukrainian Front received the following tasks. The 5th Army should "advance in the direction of Rovno, Lutsk and, by the end of September 14, capture the area of Rovno, Dubno; by the end of September 14, capture the Lutsk region, bearing in mind a further offensive against Vladimir-Volynsk. The 6th Army was supposed to "deal a powerful and decisive blow against the Polish troops and quickly advance on the Trembovlya metro station, the city of Tarnopol, the city of Lvov and, by the end of September 13, reach the Ezerna area; by the end of September 14, capture the area of Busk, Przemyshlyany, Bobrka, with the further task of capturing the city of Lvov. The 12th Army was instructed to "deal a powerful and lightning strike against the Polish troops, reliably covering its left flank and cutting off the Polish troops from the Romanian border, decisively and quickly advance in the direction of Chortkov, Stanislavov, and by the end of September 13, reach the river. Stry-pa; by the end of September 14, take possession of the Stanislavov region, with the further task of action in the direction of Stryi, Drohobych. The Soviet troops should not "get involved in frontal battles on the fortified positions of the enemy, but, leaving barriers from the front, bypass the flanks and go to the rear, continuing to carry out the assigned task." The depth of operations of the troops of the fronts was established along the line of the Latvian, Lithuanian and German borders, further along the rivers Pissa, Narev, Vistula and San and along the Hungarian and Romanian borders738.

However, these orders were not transmitted to the districts, because on the same day it turned out that Warsaw was not occupied by the Germans, the French troops began to advance towards the Siegfried Line on the Franco-German border, and Soviet military preparations took longer than expected. In this situation, at 4 p.m. on September 10, Molotov invited Schulenburg to his place and declared that the Red Army was taken by surprise by the rapid successes of the Wehrmacht in Poland and was not yet ready for action. Touching on the political side of the matter, Molotov stated that "the Soviet government intended to take advantage of the further advance of the German troops and declare that Poland was falling apart and that, as a result, the Soviet Union should come to the aid of the Ukrainians and Belarusians who were threatened by Germany. This pretext will present the intervention of the Soviet Union plausible in the eyes of the masses and will give the Soviet Union the opportunity not to look like an aggressor. But, according to the German news agency DNB, the impression is created of a possible German-Polish truce, which closes the way for Soviet action. Schulenburg promised to make an inquiry regarding the possibility of a truce and said that the actions of the Red Army in this situation are very important739. Naturally, the question of a truce with the Poles was not raised, which Ribbentrop reported to Moscow on September13740.

As a result, the Soviet troops received an order to advance only on September 14, with the corresponding changes in the deadline for completing tasks. At 04:20 on September 15, the Military Council of the Belorussian Front issued combat order No. 01, which stated that "the Belorussian, Ukrainian and Polish peoples are bleeding in a war started by the ruling landowner-capitalist clique of Poland with Germany. The workers and peasants of Byelorussia, Ukraine and Poland rose up to fight their age-old enemies, the landowners and capitalists. The German troops inflicted a heavy defeat on the main forces of the Polish army. With the dawn of September 17, 1939, the armies of the Belorussian Front go on the offensive with the task of assisting the rebellious workers and peasants of Belarus and Poland in overthrowing the yoke of the landlords and capitalists and preventing the seizure of the territory of Western Belarus by Germany. The immediate task of the front is to destroy and capture the Polish armed forces operating east of the Lithuanian border and the Grodno-Kobrin line. The specific tasks for the troops coincided

with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of September 14<sup>741</sup>. On September 14, the Military Councils of the LVO, KalVO, KOVO, BOVO and the heads of the Leningrad, Belorussian and Kiev border districts of the NKVD were sent a joint directive No. 16662 of the people's commissars of defense and internal affairs on the procedure for interaction between the border troops and the Red Army. According to the directive **"from the moment the field troops leave the areas of concentration with the aim of crossing the state border for operations on enemy territory" and until the troops cross "the state border to a depth equal to the location of the military rear (30-50 km)", the border troops, "remaining on their places, pass into operational subordination to the Military Councils of the corresponding fronts and armies"** until their special order<sup>742</sup>. On the evening of September 15, the commander of the Belorussian district of the border troops of the NKVD issued order No. 01, which determined "the main tasks of the border troops: a) with the outbreak of hostilities - the destruction of the Polish border guard in those areas where units of the Red Army would not attack; b) with the advance of army troops - to prevent the passage of the civilian population from our territory and anyone from Polish territory across the existing state border of the USSR. Units, subdivisions and individual servicemen of the Red Army should be allowed to pass through the existing border of the USSR without hindrance. Until 05:00 on September 17, 1939, the border guards ha

On September 8, according to order No. 001064 of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs L.P. Beria, the formation of 5 operational-Chehist groups of 50-70 people in KOVO and 4 groups of 40-55 people in BOVO began. Each group was assigned a battalion of 300 fighters from the border troops<sup>744</sup>. On September 15, their tasks were determined on the territory of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine. These groups were entrusted with the organization of temporary administrations in the occupied cities (with the participation of group leaders). To ensure order, suppress subversive work and suppress counter-revolutionary activities, it was necessary to create an apparatus of the NKVD in the occupied cities by separating forces from the groups. In the occupied territory, it was necessary to immediately occupy communication points (telephone, telegraph, radio, post office), state and private banks and other repositories of all kinds of valuables, printing houses, where it was necessary to organize the publication of newspapers, state archives (especially the archives of special services), arrest reactionary representatives of the government administration, leaders of counter-revolutionary parties, release political prisoners (while keeping the rest in custody), ensure public order, preventing sabotage, robbery, etc., and seize weapons and explosives from the population<sup>745</sup>.

On September 6, the Military Council of the Belorussian Front issued Order No. 005, which noted that "Polish landowners and capitalists have enslaved the working people of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine ... they are instilling national oppression and exploitation ... they have thrown our Belorussian and Ukrainian brothers into the meat grinder of the second imperialist war. National oppression and enslavement of the working people led Poland to a military defeat. The oppressed peoples of Poland faced the threat of complete destruction and beatings by their enemies. A revolutionary movement is unfolding in Western Ukraine and Belarus. Performances and uprisings of the Belorussian and Ukrainian peasantry began in Poland. The working class and peasantry of Poland are joining forces to wring the neck of their bloody oppressors. ... I order: 1. Units of the Belorussian Front to decisively come out to the aid of the working people of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine, going over to a decisive offensive along the entire front. 2. With a lightning-fast, crushing blow, crush the pan-bourgeois Polish troops and liberate the workers, peasants and working

people of Western Belarus"<sup>746</sup>. On the same day, the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front, by directive No. A0084, assigned combat missions to subordinate troops.

### **Propaganda: A Hard Explanation**

The end of the French offensive in the Saar and the completion of covert mobilization in the USSR led Molotov to tell Schulenburg on 14 September that "The Red Army has reached a state of readiness sooner than expected. Soviet actions can therefore begin earlier than the time indicated by him during the last conversation. Given the political motivation of the Soviet action (the fall of Poland and the defense of the Russian "minorities"), it would be extremely important not to start acting before the administrative center of Poland, Warsaw, fell. Therefore, Molotov asked to be informed when it could be expected to fall<sup>747</sup>. The German command did not yet have exact data on whether the Soviet intervention would follow, and continued to act according to their plans. On September 12, the OKW considered options for a final solution to the Polish problem, one of which envisaged, among other things, the creation of an independent state in Galicia and Polish Ukraine. To do this, with the help of the OUN, it was necessary to organize rebellions and the proclamation of an independent state in Western Ukraine<sup>748</sup>.

On September 15, the command of Army Group North issued an order to the forward units of the 19th Panzer corps to go to the Baranovichi-Slonim area (50 km from the Soviet border)<sup>749</sup>.

On September 14, Pravda published A.A. Zhdanov, an article in which the main reasons for the defeat of Poland were the oppression of the Ukrainian and Belarusian national minorities<sup>750</sup>. This article became a programmatic document of Soviet propaganda, substantiating the actions of the USSR in relation to its western neighbor, and its ideas were immediately taken as the basis of political work in the Red Army<sup>751</sup>, as well as the idea of social movements in Poland. Thus, the head of the Political Directorate of the 3rd Army of the Belorussian Front, Brigadier Commissar Shulin, in Directive No. 8499ss of September 16, noted that the Belarusian and Ukrainian peoples, subjected to national and social oppression in Poland, "revolted to fight their age-old enemies, the landowners and capitalists. The peoples of the Soviet Union cannot be indifferent to the revolutionary liberation struggle of the working people of Poland. Parts of the Red Army enter the lands of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine not as conquerors, but as revolutionary liberators nurtured by the great party of Lenin-Stalin. The directive of the Military Council and the Political Directorate of the 12th Army stated that "our struggle against the Polish landlords and capitalists is a revolutionary and just war. We are setting foot on our land, we are going and liberating the working people from the yoke of Polish capitalism. The task of the forthcoming campaign, as it was intelligibly explained to the commanding staff, was that "pan Poland must become Soviet"<sup>754</sup>.

The directive of the Political Directorate of the Red Army, issued on September 17, according to which "units of the heroic Red Army crossed the border of Poland, bringing with them freedom and happiness to the Ukrainians and Belarusians inhabiting Poland, peace to the Polish people," demanded that political agencies widely popularize and explain the policy of the Soviet government in the spirit of an article in Pravda about the reasons for the collapse of Poland and Molotov's speech on the radio<sup>755</sup>. As a result of the political work carried out, a powerful patriotic upsurge arose in the troops concentrated near the border with Poland, ready to "follow the order to release the brothers Ukrainians and Belarusians"<sup>756</sup>. Rallies were held in the units, at which the fighters and commanders supported the decision of the Soviet government on a liberation campaign. The general opinion was: "The time has come to liberate the working people - our brothers Ukrainians, Belarusians from the oppression of the Polish pans. Let us swear, comrades, that we will beat the enemy as we destroyed him during the years of the Civil War.

So, the junior commander of a separate communications battalion of the 97th Infantry Division, Pochuev, said: "Finally, we have waited for the moment to help our brothers abroad. We will carry out the decision of the party and the government with honor." The Red Army soldier of the artillery division of the 3rd Cavalry Division Ivashkin believed that "we will fulfill our international duty and multiply the number of Soviet republics"<sup>758</sup>. Varlamov, a Red Army soldier of the 22nd Tank Brigade, declared: "I am ready to make a march all the way to Berlin, if only to free the working people from the yoke of capital"<sup>759</sup>. According to the junior commander Vizirov (3rd Army), "for centuries the people of Western Belarus

and Western Ukraine have groaned from the landowners and capitalists. The time has come to free this people from oppression. Long live free Belarus and Ukraine! As stated, speaking at a rally in the 11th Cavalry Division, the commander of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, Divisional Commander A.I. Eremenko: "The First Cavalry Army in 1920 beat the Polish lords, they should remember this very well, now we have to beat 10 times more and for the last time"<sup>761</sup>.

th rifle corps voices were heard: "More cartridges, but a wider step. They have been waiting for us there for 20 years . "762 Recalling

the attitude towards the actions of the USSR in Poland, K.M. Simonov wrote: "One must imagine the atmosphere of all previous years, the Soviet-Polish war of 1920, the subsequent decades of tense relations with Poland, the siege, the resettlement of the Polish kulaks in the so-called eastern ko-res (kres. - M.M.), attempts **to** Polonization the Ukrainian and especially the Belarusian population, the White Guard gangs operating from the territory of Poland in the twenties, the study of the Polish language among the military as the language of one of the most possible opponents, the processes of the Belarusian communists. In general, if you remember all this atmosphere, then why shouldn't I be glad that we were going to liberate Western Ukraine and Western Belarus? We are moving towards that line of national delimitation, which once, in the twentieth year, was considered fair, from the point of view of ethnicity, even by such an enemy of our country as Lord Curzon, and which was remembered as the Curzon line, but from which we had to retreat then and go to peace, giving Poland into the hands of Western Ukraine and Belarus, because of military defeats, behind which there were unlimited exhaustion of forces during the years of world and civil wars, devastation, unfinished Wrangel, the upcoming Kronstadt and Antonovshchina - in general, the twentieth year "763 .

However, the political agencies also noted the presence of "wrong" sentiments. The Red Army soldier of the platoon of the special department of the 13th Rifle Corps, Kruzhiin, asked the question: "The Nazis did not attack us, and we don't want to take an inch of foreign land, so why are we marching?"764 The Red Army soldier Muravitsky was interested: "Why are we going to defend Western Ukraine and Belarus, because we have a policy of peace, let them free themselves, but don't attack us, that's fine." According to the Red Army soldier Sheludchev, "we have a slogan that we do not want foreign land, but why did we cross the Polish border? After all, in Poland and in other countries there is a Communist Party, there is a proletariat, well, let them make a revolution themselves and get rid of the landowners and capitalists by their own efforts . The political instructor of the training battalion of the 4th Tank Brigade of the Ukrainian Front Poteleshko said: "The commander and commissar of the battalion told us that we would fight, but did not say with whom. No one has declared war on us, we are pursuing a policy of peace and we are trying so that no one will drag us into the war, and suddenly we ourselves declare and are drawn into the war. Such a policy is contrary to the teachings of the Lenin-Stalin party. Lenin taught that you cannot bring a revolution on bayonets, either to Poland or to another country. Someone had a hand in this in order to change our policy. 766 A Red Army soldier of the 34th Tank Brigade of the Moscow Military District, Orekhov, said: "I

cannot fight. How will I stab at least a German when he is a worker like me..."767 Makarov, a Red Army soldier of military unit 4474 of the Leningrad Military District (LVO), believed that "the Soviet Union actually began to help Hitler in the capture of Poland. They write about peace, but in reality they have become aggressors. The population of Western Ukraine and Belarus does not need our help, but we seize it and only formally report it. Junior commander of the 2nd searchlight regiment of military unit 4820 LVO

768 that we are not at war, but are standing up

for them" Zolotov expressed the following considerations: "Why do we need all this, we already have so many of our poor who are not provided for, and here they also take Ukrainians for themselves. Ukrainians are the worst and most harmful people, I lived with Ukrainians and know them." According to the Red Army soldier of military unit 4911 LVO Iofchik: "Our people felt the weakness of the Polish army and let's engage in an aggressive policy. Everywhere we write and speak against the aggressors, but in essence we ourselves are them . Korasyk, a Red Army soldier of military unit 5281 of the Kharkov Military District, believed that "Germany is seizing foreign territory in Poland, and we are doing the same. They want us to shed blood." According to the Red Army soldier of the 69th Artillery Regiment of the 2nd Separate Red Banner Army (2nd OKA) Pozdnyakov, "The Soviet Union went to defend the peoples of Poland, which Germany had already defeated, it turns out that we are also raking in the heat with the wrong hands"770 .

Vostrikov, a Red Army soldier of military unit 5771 of the 2nd OKA, a member of the Komsomol, believed that "Germany wanted to seize Poland for itself, and the Soviet Union is seizing it for itself." The deputy political instructor of the same unit, Kislyakov, believed that "the measures of the government are an aggressive policy on our part." According to the Red Army soldier of military unit 5952 of the 2nd OKA Kharchenko, "when concluding the treaty, the USSR and Germany,

obviously, agreed among themselves on the division of Poland and now they are practically carrying it out." The Red Army soldier of military unit 7502 of the 2nd OKA Zarubaev said: "Here we gave the order to our army to cross the border, the capitalists can say to us that we are using the moment and raking in the heat with the wrong hands, this is not help, but simply the Soviet . Student of the 3rd year of the command faculty of the Academy of Chemical Defense

Union itself 771 got involved into the war" Adamashin: "Here's Red imperialism for you. They said that we do not want foreign land, but when th

you can grab a piece, they immediately forgot about it. When the Germans captured the Sudetenland, they also wrote that they were protecting the Germans, there were just as many Germans there as there were Belarusians and Ukrainians in Poland. We shouted, the aggressors, and now we ourselves are doing the same ... It's good to rake in the heat with the wrong hands. The Germans

defeated Poland, and we are ready to go. In general, in the assessments by the personnel of the Red Army of the entry of Soviet troops into Poland, one can see not only confusion from a sharp change in Soviet propaganda, but also simply pacifist sentiments with a specific Soviet tinge.

In an effort to demonstrate to Britain and France that German actions in Poland were supported by the USSR, Berlin continued to call on Moscow to bring the Red Army into action. In a telegram to Moscow dated September 15, Ribbentrop reported that the fall of Warsaw was a matter of a few days, once again confirmed the inviolability of the demarcation lines in Poland agreed in Moscow, approved the planned entry of Soviet troops into Poland, which, in his opinion, freed the Wehrmacht from the need to pursue Poles to the Soviet border, asked to be informed of the day and hour of the border crossing by Soviet troops, to coordinate the actions of the troops, he proposed to hold a meeting of Soviet and German officers in Bialystok and proposed a joint communiqué: "In view of the complete collapse of the form of government that previously existed in Poland, the imperial government and the government of the USSR considered it necessary put an end to the further intolerable political and economic situation existing in the Polish territories. They consider it their common duty to restore peace and tranquility in these territories, which are of natural interest to them, and to establish a new order there by drawing natural boundaries and creating viable economic institutions. Moscow's attempt to explain its intervention as a German threat to the Belarusian and Ukrainian population caused a sharply negative reaction from Berlin. At the same time, in an effort to push the Soviet government to send troops into Poland, Ribbentrop suggested that Schulenburg point out to Molotov that "if Russian intervention is not launched, the question will inevitably arise whether there will be created in the area lying east of the German zone of influence, a political vacuum", creating "conditions for the formation of new states"<sup>773</sup>.

On the evening of September 16, Molotov told Schulenburg that the Soviet government had decided to intervene in Polish affairs tomorrow or the day after tomorrow and that he would soon be able to accurately name the day and hour. Molotov, who knew from intelligence about Schulenburg's assignment<sup>774</sup>, rejected the proposal to publish a joint communiqué proposed by the German side, which presented the Soviet side as a direct ally of Germany, and briefly stated the motivation for the actions of the USSR, which would be indicated in the press: "The Polish state has collapsed and no longer exists, therefore all agreements concluded with Poland are annulled; third powers may try to capitalize on the resulting chaos; The Soviet Union considers it its duty to intervene to protect its Ukrainian and Belarusian brothers and to enable this unfortunate population to work in peace. At 2 a.m. on September 17, Schulenburg was received by Stalin and informed that the Red Army would cross the border with Poland at 6 a.m., and that a joint Soviet-German communiqué could not be published earlier than in 2-3 days. Stalin asked Schulenburg to send it to Berlin so that German planes would not fly east of the Bialystok-Brest-Lvov line, and read out a note prepared for transmission to the Polish ambassador in Moscow. After some clarification of its text, made at the suggestion of Schulenburg, the German ambassador was satisfied and left the Kremlin<sup>776</sup>. At 3.15 am on September 17, the Polish ambassador in Moscow, W. Grzybowski, was handed a note from the Soviet government, which stated that "The Polish state and its government have actually ceased to exist.

Thus, the treaties concluded between the USSR and Poland ceased to be valid. Left to itself and left without leadership, Poland has become a convenient field for all sorts of accidents and surprises that could pose a threat to the USSR. Therefore, being hitherto neutral, the Soviet government cannot be more neutral about these facts, as well as about the defenseless position of the Ukrainian and Belarusian population. "In view of this situation, the Soviet government ordered the High Command of the Red Army to order the troops to cross the border and take under their protection the lives and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus"<sup>777</sup>. The Polish ambassador refused to "accept the note, because it would be incompatible with the dignity of the Polish government." As a result, the note was handed over to the embassy while Grzybowski was in the NKID<sup>778</sup>. On the same day, the text of this note was also handed over to all the states with which Moscow had diplomatic relations, with the notification that the USSR would continue to remain neutral in relation to these countries<sup>779</sup>. This argumentation of the Soviet intervention in the events in Poland

was repeated in Molotov's radio speech on September 17 and in his speech at the session of the Supreme Soviet USSR October 31, 1939<sup>780</sup>

#### **Side forces**

By the evening of September 16, the troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts were deployed in their initial positions. areas to attack. The Soviet grouping united 8 infantry, 5 cavalry and 2 tank corps, 21 rifle and 13 cavalry divisions, 16 armored, 2 motorized brigades and Dnieper military flotilla (DVF) (Table 30)<sup>781</sup>. Available data

the number of these groupings are presented in table 31, and the air forces of the fronts, taking into account relocated on September 9-10 to their territory of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd aviation armies of the special destinations totaled 3298 aircraft<sup>782</sup>. In addition, about 16.5 thousand soldiers served on the border. border guards of the Belarussian and Kiev border districts<sup>783</sup>.

**Table 30**

#### **Fronts Army Corps Divisions and brigades**

	3rd 4th SC 50th, 27th SD
	5th SD, 24th KD, 22nd, 25th brigade
	11th 16th SC 2nd, 100th SD
	3rd KK 7th, 36th KD, 6th brigade
Belarussian	5th SC 4th, 13th SD
	KMG 6th KK 4th, 6th, 11th KD
	15th TK 2nd, 27th brigade, 20th brigade, 21st brigade
	10th 11th SC 6th, 33rd, 121st SD
	4th 8th SD, 29th, 32nd brigade
	23rd SC 52nd SD, DVF
	5th 15th SC 60th, 87th, 45th SD
	8th SC 81st, 44th SD, 36th brigade
	6th 17th SC 96th, 97th SD, 38th, 10th brigade
Ukrainian	2nd KK 3rd, 5th, 14th KD, 24th brigade
	13th SC 72nd, 99th SD
	12th 4th KK 32nd, 34th KD, 26th brigade
	5th KK 9th, 16th KD, 23rd brigade
	25th TC 4th, 5th brigade, 1st brigade

**Table 31**

<b>Army, Front</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Guns and mortars</b>	<b>Tanks</b>
A		121968	752	743
11th A		90000 <sup>2</sup>	520*	265
KMG		65 595	1234	834
10th A		42135	330	28
4th A		40 365	184	508
Dep. 23rd sk		18 547	147	28
Belorussky front	378 610	5th A	3 167	2406
80 844			635	522
6th A	80 834		630	675
12th A	77 300		527	1 133
Ukrainian front	238,978	Total	1792	2330
617,588	On the eastern border		4959	4736

of Poland, except for 25 battalions and 7 border guard squadrons (about 12 thousand people or 8 soldiers per 1 km of the border)<sup>784</sup>, there were practically no other troops, which was good known to Soviet intelligence<sup>785</sup>. So, according to intelligence data of the 4th Army, "the border strip to the river. Schara is not occupied by field troops, and the KOP battalions are weak in their combat training and combat capability.



... Serious resistance from the Polish army to the river. Schar is unlikely to be expected from the Poles"786 . At 05:00 on September 17, the forward and assault detachments of the Soviet armies and border troops crossed the border and defeated the Polish border guards787 . Crossing the border confirmed the data of Soviet intelligence about the absence of significant groupings of Polish troops, which made it possible to accelerate the offensive.

For the Polish leadership, the intervention of the USSR was completely unexpected. Polish intelligence did not record any threatening movements of the Red Army, and the information received on September 1-5 was perceived as an understandable reaction to the outbreak of war in Europe. And although on September 12 information was received from Paris about a possible action of the USSR against Poland, they were not 788 And this despite the fact that as against Poland taken early as June 1939 Rydz-Smigly "admitted the possibility of an armed action of the Soviets seriously, but, however, only in the final period of the war, and only when, under the influence of unfavorable developments for us, the Russian government comes to the conclusion that the Poles have definitely lost the campaign. Like looking into the water.

On the night of September 17, the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army, Rydz-Smigly, located in Kutu near the border with Romania, began to receive alarming reports from the eastern border. Major Ya. Gurbsky, head of intelligence of the border guard corps (KOP), reported that on September 16 the Polish passenger train was not allowed to reach Kyiv and returned to Zdobunovo. At 6.45 in the morning, Major Yu. Benkovsky from the 5th representation of the 2nd department of the General Staff in Chortkiv reported that "from 5 o'clock in the areas of Pidvolochisk, Gusyatyn and Zalu-zhe, some unidentified units because of the darkness were trying to cross the border. At the moment, units of the KOP are fighting there." At about 7 o'clock, Captain E. Friesendorf from the intelligence of the KOP reported: "At 6.20 it was identified that these were Bolshevik regular units. Behind them, the sound of engines can be heard. In the region of Podvolochisk, Tochiski Sekerzhinets, units of the KOP are retreating under pressure.

At 8 o'clock, the commander of the Podillia KOP regiment, Lieutenant Colonel M. Kotarba, reported that "parts of the Soviet army crossed the border and occupied Podvolochisk, Gusyatyn and Skala-Podolsk. The cavalry is moving towards Borshchiv. The chief of staff of the commander-in-chief, General of the Brigade V. Stakhevich, reported this to Rydz-Smigly, and after a conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Beck, who was in Kolomyia, who had no news from Moscow, ordered that parliamentarians be sent to the location of the Soviet troops with the question in what capacity the Red Army crossed the border Poland. At about 2 pm, a telegram was received from the commander of the garrison in Lutsk, General of the Brigade P. Skuratovich: "Today at 6 o'clock, three Soviet columns crossed the border - one armored near Korets, another armored near Ostrog, the third cavalry with artillery near Dederkaly. The Bolsheviks are riding with the hatches of their tanks open, smiling and waving their helmets. At about 10 o'clock the first column reached Goshka. I ask, what should we do? Disoriented were not only representatives of the Polish troops and state structures on the ground, but also the Polish leadership, who was in Kolomyia-Kutu. The behavior of the Soviet troops also seemed strange - they, as a rule, did not shoot first, they treated

the Polish troops with demonstrative goodwill, treated them to cigarettes and said that they had come to the aid against the Germans. On the ground, they waited for the instructions of the commander-in-chief. At first, Rydz-Smigly was inclined to give the order to repel the Soviet invasion. However, a closer examination of the situation showed that there are no forces in Eastern Poland, except for the KOP battalions and a certain number of rear and spare parts of the army. These weakly armed troops had no chance in battle with the Red Army. As a result, on September 17, the Polish leadership was faced with a fait accompli and, based on the statements of the Soviet government and its note, believed that the Red Army was introduced in order to limit the zone of German occupation. Therefore, at about 11:40 p.m. on September 17, an order from Rydz-Smigly was transmitted over the radio: "The Soviets have invaded. I order to carry out a withdrawal to Romania and Hungary by the shortest routes. Do not conduct hostilities with the Soviets, only in the event of an attempt on their part to disarm our units. The task for Warsaw and Modlin, which must defend themselves against the Germans, is unchanged. The units, to which the Soviets have approached, must negotiate with them in order to withdraw the garrisons to Romania or Hungary. Only units were ordered to continue resistance.

KOP, retreating from Zbruch to the Dniester, and units covering the "Romanian bridge". Of course, the

Polish command had a plan for the deployment of troops on the eastern border - "Vskhud", which was developed from 1935-1936. According to him, north of Polesie, it was supposed to deploy three armies. In the area of Postavy, Glubokoye, Molodechno, the Vilna army was deployed, consisting of 3 infantry divisions and 2 cavalry brigades, to the south near Novogrudok, Baranovichi - the Baranovichi army (4 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry brigades), and in their rear in the Lida region - the army "Lida" (3 infantry divisions). In the wooded swampy basin of the Pripyat River, it was planned to concentrate the Polesie task force, consisting of 2 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade. On the southern sector of a possible front near Sarny, Rovno

the Volyn army (4 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade) was to be deployed, the Kremenets, Tarnopol region to the Dniester - the Podolia army (5 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry and 1 motorized brigades). They have in the rear in the area of Brody, Zlochev - the army of "Lions" consisting of 3 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade. The main reserve of 6 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry and 1 motorized brigade was to be located in the Brest area. In addition, it was envisaged to deploy several reserve infantry divisions<sup>791</sup>. That is, it was planned to deploy all the available forces of the Polish Army on the eastern border. Of course, in the real situation of 1939, this whole plan remained on paper. On September 17, the Polish ambassadors in England and France notified the allied governments that the

Soviet Union "made an attack on Poland ... The Polish government protested in Moscow and instructed its ambassador to demand a passport"<sup>792</sup>. Meanwhile, the Soviet troops were rapidly developing the offensive, and the Polish government and military command crossed the Romanian border late in the evening of September 17, hoping to leave Romania for France. In the morning

On September 18, a message was sent from Romanian Chernivtsi to Polish diplomatic missions on behalf of the President of Poland. On the same day, the Romanian authorities demanded that the Polish government sign a declaration relinquishing all of its constitutional political and administrative duties. This would make it possible to present the situation as a transit not of the government, but simply of Polish citizens. However, Beck refused to sign such a statement. Then, on September 19, members of the Polish government were transferred to Slanitsy, where they were informed about the internment. Romania preferred to heed the "friendly" advice of Germany<sup>793</sup>. On September 17, representatives from the commander of the defense of the city,

General Rummel, arrived at the Soviet embassy in Warsaw, saying that they were not fighting the Red Army in accordance with the order of Rydz Smigly. From further contacts with the Polish military, the Soviet charge d'affaires Chebyshev concluded on September 25 that they were waiting for the imminent arrival of the Red Army and expected to surrender to it, and not. In the meantime, Polish diplomats in the USSR were told that their presence and on October <sup>794</sup>undesirable 9, 115 people, led by Grzybowski, left Moscow for Leningrad to be sent to Finland. Consul General in for the Wehrmacht<sup>795</sup>, Kiev Matushinsky disappeared without a trace **The Polish campaign of the Red Army: September 17-21** On the right flank of the Belorussian Front of the Red Army, the 3rd Army was

deployed from the Latvian border to Begoml, which had the task of reaching the Sharkovshchina-Dunilovichi line by the end of the first day of the offensive —oz. Blyada-Yablontsy, and the next day to the front Sventsyany, Mikhalishki and further advance on Vilna. The main blow was dealt by the right wing of the army, where the troops of the 4th Rifle Corps and the mobile group as part of the 24th Cavalry Division and the 22nd Tank Brigade were concentrated under the command of the division commander-24 brigade commander P. Akhlyustin. At 5 a.m. on September 17, the troops crossed the border and, with the help of border units, destroyed the Polish border guards:

21 and captured 102 Polish border guards. The 5th Rifle Division and the 25th Tank Brigade, advancing from Vetrino, approached the northern outskirts of Glubokoye by evening through Plissa. The units of the mobile group advancing in the direction of the main attack occupied Dokshitsy at 8 o'clock, by 18 o'clock - Dunilovichi, where the tank units stopped due to lack of fuel, since the rear column of the brigade was not let forward by the commander of the cavalry division. Infantry formations lagged far behind: the 27th Infantry Division occupied Parafianovo at 12 o'clock and approached the river. Servech, and the 50th Infantry Division occupied Krulevshchizna. The losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 3 people killed, 24 wounded and 12 soldiers drowned. To speed up the offensive the next day, the 25th tank brigade was included in the

mobile group, which received the task of advancing on Sventsyany.

However, at 3.55 on September 18, the headquarters of the 3rd Army received an order from the Belorussian Front to occupy Vilna during the day. After analyzing the situation, the command of the 3rd Army at 9 am assigned this task to the Akhlyustin group, moving the deadline for its execution to the morning of September 19. True, the real execution of this order began only on the evening of September 18, when it was finally handed over to Akhlyustin. The fact is that the troops of the mobile group in the morning began to act according to the original plan. At 7 o'clock the reconnaissance group of the 22nd tank brigade occupied Post-Tavy, and at 14 o'clock it reached Sventsyan, where at 15.30 the reconnaissance groups of the 25th tank brigade and the 24th cavalry vision approached. When Soviet tanks approached the airfield in Kobylniki, 38 Polish aircraft flew out of there, and

2 were burned by the Poles. The main forces of the mobile group were just advancing towards the Sventsians. Moreover, the division commander-24 again refused to let the combat units of the cavalry rear of the 22nd tank brigade forward, which, having arrived in Sventsiany, again found itself without fuel.

Having received an order to take Vilna at 22:00 in Sventsyany, Akhlyustin created a mobile group from the 10th tank regiment of the 25th tank brigade and the reconnaissance battalion of the 27th rifle division under the command of Colonel Lomako, which, having received all the available fuel, at 0.30 19 September came from Sventsyan. They were followed a little later by a motorcycle group consisting of 700 cavalymen of the 24th Cavalry Division dismounted and mounted on vehicles. Meanwhile, Lomako's group reached Podbrodze at 2.30, where they disarmed 40 Polish soldiers sleeping at the station, and at 3.30 at Nemenchin captured the bridge over the Viliya River, arresting 15 policemen who were about to blow it up. At 4.30 the group reached the northern outskirts of Vilna. Meanwhile, the rest of the 3rd Army reached the following areas by the evening of September 18. The 25th tank brigade was in the Godutsishek area, the 27th rifle division went to the area of \u200b\u200bMyadel and Naroch lakes, the 50th rifle division was located between Postavy and Myadel, and the 24th cavalry division was concentrated at Sventsyan. On the extreme right flank of the army, the 10th Rifle Division advanced south of the Western Dvina River towards Drissa .

To the south of the 3rd Army, on the front from Begoml to Ivenets, the troops of the 11th Army were deployed, which had the task of taking Molodechno, Volozhin by the end of September 17, the next day - Oshmyany, Ivye and moving further to Grodno. Having crossed the border at 5 o'clock on September 17, the 6th tank brigade occupied Volozhin at 12 o'clock, connections

At the same time, the 16th Rifle Corps entered Krasnoe, and by 19 o'clock they reached Molodechno, Benzovets. The formations of the 3rd Cavalry Corps had already reached the area of Rachinety, Poryche, Marshalka by 15 o'clock, and on the morning of September 18 they moved further towards Lida, reaching the front of Rynoviche, Postoiantsy, Voyshtoviche by 10 o'clock. At that time

The 3rd Cavalry Corps and the 6th Tank Brigade were given the task of advancing on Vilna, which was ordered to be occupied on September 19th. At 11.30 the cavalry moved to Osh-myany, which were occupied without a fight at 14 o'clock. Having learned from the local population that a Polish convoy with political prisoners was moving ahead, units of the 8th Tank Regiment gave chase and captured about 150 Polish servicemen in the Yurishany area. By the end of September 18, the formations of the cavalry corps reached the Oshmyany-Kurmelyany area. Being forced to rest the horses, the commander of the 3rd Cavalry Corps created a consolidated tank brigade under the command of Colonel Miroshnikov from the 7th and 8th tank regiments of the cavalry divisions, which continued the attack on Vilna.

At that time, only insignificant Polish units were in Vilna: about 16 infantry battalions (about 7 thousand soldiers and 14 thousand militia) with 14 light guns. However, the Polish command in Vilna did not have a general attitude towards the Bolshevik invasion. At 9 o'clock on September 18, the commander of the garrison, Colonel Ya. Okulich-Kozarin, gave the order: "We are not at war with the Bolsheviks, units, by additional order, will leave Vilna and cross the Lithuanian border; non-combat units can start leaving the city, combat units remain in position, but cannot fire without an order. However, since some of the officers took this order as treason, and rumors spread in the city about a coup in Germany and a declaration of war by Romania and Hungary, Colonel Okulich-Kozarin around 16.30 decided to refrain from issuing an order to retreat until 20 hours.

Around 19.10, the commander of the 2nd battalion, deployed in the southern and southwestern outskirts / oroda, Lieutenant Colonel S. Shileiko reported on the appearance of Soviet tanks and asked if he could open fire. While Okulich-Kozarin gave the order to open fire, while this order was transmitted to the troops, 8 tanks had already passed the first line of defense and reserve units were sent to fight them. At about 20 o'clock Okulich-Kozarin ordered the troops to withdraw from the city and sent Lieutenant Colonel T. Podvysotsky to the location of the Soviet troops in order to notify them that the Polish side did not want to fight them, and demand that they leave the city. After that, Okulich-Kozarin himself left Vilna, and Podvysotsky, who returned at about 21:00, decided to defend the city and at about 21:45 issued an order to suspend the withdrawal of troops. At that time, uncoordinated battles were going on in the city, in which the Vilna Polish youth played an important role. Teacher G. Osinsky organized volunteer teams from gymnasium students, who took up positions on the hills. The oldest ones fired, the rest delivered ammunition, organized communications, etc.

Approaching about 19.30 on September 18 to Vilna, the 8th and 7th tank regiments started a battle for the southern part of the city. The 8th tank regiment broke into the southern part of the city at 20.30. The 7th Panzer Regiment, which ran into a stubborn defense, was able to enter the southwestern part of the city only at dawn. Meanwhile, the 6th tank brigade, having crossed the river. Berezina, passed Golshany and at 20 o'clock on September 18 reached the southern outskirts of Vilna, establishing contact with units of the 8th tank regiment. Using guns located on the Hill of Three Crosses, the Polish youth fired artillery at the advancing tanks. Bottles with a mixture of gasoline and oil were widely used to destroy tanks in the city. One Soviet

the tank was burned on Zavalnaya Street. The driver Shenkunos and the turret gunner Kulkov were killed in the tank, and the squadron commander Senior Lieutenant Bo-dyl was wounded, but managed to crawl away from the tank and, taking off his cap, began to make his way to his own with a revolver in his hand. Later, he, who had lost consciousness, was accidentally picked up by the tankers of the crew of the junior commander Kulikov. Having found out that a significant part of the regular troops and headquarters had already left the city, Podvysotsky was forced to make a decision at about 22.30 to leave Vilna and withdraw to the Lithuanian border. At night, the enemy began to retreat beyond the river. Viliya.

At 5 o'clock the advance detachment of the Lomako group reached the Green Bridge, where a firefight ensued. At 5.45, the tanks of the 8th Tank Regiment approached the same place. For two hours, a battle went on near the Green Bridge, which ended with its capture at 8.50. During the battle, 3 anti-tank guns and 5 heavy machine guns were destroyed. In an effort to burn the Green Bridge, the Poles put on it and set fire to a car with a barrel of gasoline, but the tank under the command of Dyachek knocked the car off the bridge, the fire was extinguished, and the troops crossed to the northern part of the city. Meanwhile, Lomako decided to bypass the city with the main forces from the north and cut it off from the Lithuanian border. By 8 o'clock on September 19, units of the 3rd Cavalry Corps approached. The 102nd cavalry regiment launched an offensive on the southeastern outskirts, and the 42nd cavalry regiment moved around the city from the east and concentrated on the northeastern outskirts. Meanwhile, the 7th Cavalry Division bypassed the city from the west. At 10 o'clock a freight station was captured, where there were 3 echelons with ammunition and military equipment. At 12.45, the gendarme department was captured, to which a tank drove up under the command of Shchechka. Pointing the cannon and machine gun at the window, the tank commander, together with the workers, went into the building. Some of the police officers, seeing the tank, fled, while the rest surrendered and even helped to carry weapons out of the building. At 13 o'clock the station

was busy. At 4 p.m., a shootout broke out again near the Green Bridge, during which one armored vehicle and a tank were hit. At 11.30, a motorized group of the 3rd Army approached, and by order of Akhlyustin Lomako was appointed commandant of the city. By 6 p.m., resistance was broken, and by the evening of September 19, the situation in the city had returned to normal, but separate skirmishes arose until 2 a.m. on September 20. In battles for

In Vilno, units of the 11th Army lost 13 people killed and 24 people wounded, 5 tanks and 4 armored vehicles were hit. On September 20-23, Soviet troops pulled up to Vilna, clearing the city and surrounding areas from Polish units. In total, about 10 thousand people were taken prisoner, 97 steam locomotives, 473 passenger and 960 freight cars became trophies of the Soviet troops (83 of them with food, 172 with oats, 6 with ammunition, 9 tanks with gasoline and 2 with alcohol).

At 3.40 on September 19, the 3rd Army received an order to organize the protection of the Latvian and Lithuanian borders. However, before the infantry units approached, patrols and motorized groups from the 36th and 24th cavalry divisions, the 6th, 22nd and 25th tank brigades could be used to protect the borders. At 22.30 on September 21, the 144th cavalry regiment of the 36th cavalry division, which came out in the Meishagol area to the Lithuanian border, dispersed small groups of Poles. As the cavalry division patrols approached the border, the Lithuanian border guards threw out a white flag and declared: "We don't want to fight with you, we keep neutrality." Only

On September 23-25, the approaching rifle divisions of the 3rd Army were able to really organize security borders.

While all these turbulent events were taking place in the Vilna region, the troops of the 16th Rifle Corps of the 11th Army were turned to the northwest and moved towards Lida. At 6 pm

on September 18, the advanced units of the 100th Infantry Division occupied Krevo. On the morning of September 19, a motorized group of the 16th Rifle Corps under the command of brigade commander Rozanov was formed from the tank battalions of the 100th and 2nd rifle divisions and the armored company of the reconnaissance battalion of the 2nd division, which set out in the direction of Lida. In the area of the Berdovka manor, a motorcycle group captured about 300 Polish soldiers with a cash register of 22,000 zlotys. At 11 p.m., the group entered Lida, already occupied by the 152nd cavalry regiment of the 6th cavalry corps, where it was able to refuel with local fuel. At 7 o'clock on September 20, she was given the task of advancing on Grodno. Moving towards the city, the motorcycle group at Skidel encountered a Polish detachment (about 200 people), who suppressed the anti-Polish uprising of the local population. In this punitive raid, 17 local residents were killed, including two teenagers aged 13 and 16. Turning around, the motorcycle group attacked the enemy in Skidel from both flanks. Hoping to stop the tanks, the Poles set fire to the bridge, but the Soviet tankers sent the vehicles through the fire and managed to slip over the burning bridge, which collapsed after the passage of the tanks, to the other side of the Skidel River. To the south, floating tanks crossed the river on their own. However, the encircled enemy desperately resisted for an hour and a half, and the battle ended only by 18 hours. At the end of the battle, the tankers received some help from armed local residents. The group lost 1 fighter wounded, 1 armored vehicle was

hit, 1 tank damaged. Meanwhile, the main forces of the 16th Rifle Corps were advancing westward and by the end of September 22 they had reached the Radun-Lida

line. While the troops of the 3rd and 11th armies occupied the north-eastern part of Western Belarus, to the south, on the front from Fanipol to Nesvizh, units of the KMG went on the offensive, with the task of reaching Lyubcha, Kirin on the first day of the offensive, and the next day to force the river. Keep quiet and move to Volkovysk. The 15th Panzer Corps, advancing on the southern flank of the group, crossed the border at 0500 and, breaking the slight resistance of the Polish border guards, moved west. By the evening of September 17, the 27th tank brigade crossed the river. Servech, 2nd tank brigade - r. Usha, and the 20th Motorized Brigade was pulling up to the border. At about 4 p.m. on September 18, the 2nd Tank Brigade entered Slonim, whose population joyfully greeted the Red Army. The Polish garrison retreating from the city burned one of the two bridges across the river. Shchara, and the 15th Panzer Corps had to be content with only one bridge. The next day, the advance detachment of the 2nd Tank Brigade entered Volkovysk at 16:00. In the meantime, at 0800, the commander of the 15th Panzer Corps received an order, together with motorized detachments of the 13th and 4th rifle divisions, to occupy Grodno and Sokulka by the end of September 19th. The 27th tank brigade entered the Palace, and the 21st tank brigade also approached there. But here again, the lack of rears made itself felt: throughout the day, the main forces of the 15th Panzer Corps stood, stretched out along the Slonim-Volkovysk road, without fuel. The 20th motorized brigade approached Slonim from the east, which further blocked the roads and delayed the approach of the rear columns.

By the end of September 17, the 6th Cavalry Corps crossed the river. Wushu. The backlog and the absence of serious enemy resistance led to the decision to create motorized mechanized groups from tank regiments of divisions in order to speed up the advance. On the night of September 18, the advance detachment of the 11th Cavalry Division occupied Novogrudok. At 3 o'clock on September 19, a motorized detachment under the command of the corps commander, divisional commander A.I. Eremenko occupied Volkovysk. On September 19, the 152nd Cavalry Regiment of the 6th Cavalry Division, after a short battle, occupied Lida, where 2,500 people were taken prisoner, 300 rifles, 100 thousand rounds of ammunition, 23 aircraft became trophies of the Soviet troops. The 5th Rifle Corps crossed the border at 5 o'clock on September 17 and, having broken weak resistance, captured 29 Polish border guards, losing 6 people killed and 2 wounded. By 17 o'clock the formations of the corps reached the Stolbtsy-Baranovichi railway line, and by 23 o'clock they reached the river. Usha. During the day, mobile detachments were created in the corps, advancing to the river. Servech. The motorcycle group of the 4th Infantry Division (101st Infantry Regiment) entered Slonim at 08:00 on September 19, taking over 6,000 prisoners from tank units. At 04:00 on September 20, a motorized group of the 119th Infantry Regiment entered Volkovysk, where it was subordinate to the 15th Tank Corps. 3 km west of the city, she collided with two squadrons of Poles and, having lost 1 killed, captured 150 people. On September 21, the main forces of the 5th Rifle

Corps were at Zelva, and the 119th and 101st regiments were thrown to Grodno. In Grodno there were insignificant forces of Polish troops: 2 improvised battalions and an assault company of the reserve center of the 29th Infantry Division, the 31st guard battalion, 5 platoons of positional artillery (5 guns), 2 anti-aircraft machine gun companies, a two-battalion detachment of Colonel Zh. Blumsky, the national defense battalion "Postavy", the dismounted 32nd division of the Podlaska cavalry brigade, there were many gendarmerie and police in the city. The commander of the "Grodno" district, Colonel B. Adamovich, was determined to evacuate units to Lithuania. On September 18, riots took place in the city in connection with the release of prisoners from the city prison and the anti-Polish speech of local "red" activists. Soviet troops were expected from the east, but they approached the city from the south, which was beneficial for the defenders, since the right bank of the Neman is steep.

Only as fuel arrived, units of the 15th Panzer Corps began to move towards Grodno in peculiar waves from 07:00 on September 20. At 1300, 50 tanks of the 27th Tank Brigade approached the southern outskirts of Grodno. The tankers attacked the enemy on the move and by the evening occupied the southern part of the city, reaching the banks of the Neman. Several tanks managed to break through the bridge to the north bank in the city center. However, without infantry support, the tanks were attacked by soldiers, policemen and youths, who used a few guns and Molotov cocktails. As a result, some of the tanks were destroyed, and some were taken back beyond the Neman. The 27th Tank Brigade, with the support of the 119th Rifle Regiment of the 13th Rifle Division, which arrived at 18:00, occupied the southern part of the city. A group of junior lieutenant Shaikhuddinov, with the help of local workers, crossed in boats to the right bank of the Neman, 2 km east of the city. On the other side, battles began for cemeteries, where machine-gun nests were equipped. During the night battle, the 119th regiment managed to gain a foothold on the right bank and reach the approaches to the eastern outskirts of the city.

On September 21, Kutru was approached by the 101st Rifle Regiment, which also crossed to the right bank and deployed north of the 119th Regiment. From 6 o'clock on September 21, the regiments, reinforced by 4 guns and 2 tanks, attacked the city and by 12 o'clock, despite the counterattacks of the Poles, they reached the railway line, and by 14 o'clock they reached the center of Grodno, but by evening they were again taken to the outskirts. In these battles, the regiments were supported by a motorized group of the 16th Rifle Corps, which, after spending the night on the highway a few kilometers from Skidel, at dawn

September 21 moved to Grodno. Approaching the city, the tanks suppressed firing points on its eastern outskirts, which provided support to the 119th and 101st rifle regiments. The attack of the city from the east was successful, but after crossing the railway line, the main forces of the rifle units again retreated to the outskirts. As a result, the tanks were forced to fight alone. With the help of bottles with a combustible mixture, the tank of the platoon commander, junior lieutenant Aleksanov and the driver Komarov, was burned along with the crew. The tank of lieutenant Mirsky was ambushed and set on fire, but the driver mechanic Korniychuk, directing the car at the bushes and low trees, was able to knock down the flames. Having destroyed many enemy firing points, by the evening the tanks were also withdrawn from the city, at the strategic points of which (post office, telegraph, power plant, etc.) sentries were left. In addition, the 4th Cavalry Division was sent to Grodno after a day's work on the evening of

September 20. At 9 o'clock on September 21, the 20th motorized brigade also approached Grodno, and Eremenko, who arrived with the motorized detachment of the 6th cavalry corps (3 BT-5 tanks and 2 armored vehicles), decided to lead the attack on the bridge. Sitting in an armored car, he moved at the head of the attackers, but an enemy shell jammed the tower. Transferring to another armored vehicle, Eremenko again led the attack and broke through to the bridge, where the engine of the armored vehicle stalled due to overheating. Having opened fire from a cannon on enemy firing points, the armored vehicle caused heavy shelling from the other side, which damaged the tower. Finally, the driver managed to start the engine, and the armored car started back along the slope of the bridge, but after driving about 100 meters, the engine stalled again, and then the armored car had to be towed. Now Eremenko moved into the BT-7 tank and again burst onto the bridge. However, the concrete blocks were an impenetrable obstacle for the tank, and for 2 and a half hours it fired from a place on the opposite bank.

As Eremenko recalled 30 years later, "a battle began on the bridge with enemy firing points. We were supported by 5 more tanks from the shore... We shot all the ammunition and destroyed about 20 enemy firing points. My tank also suffered: it received three holes, more than 20 large dents. A machine gun, both sights, a radiator were broken, a gas tank was damaged. All of us - [mechanic]-driver [S.P. Eliseev], charging [S.I. Novikov] and I was wounded. On the last petrol, the tank went backward with difficulty into cover"799 after dark. Eremenko himself was lightly wounded in the nose and arm by armor fragments. Among those who defended the bridge was the commander of the 2nd squadron of the 101st reserve uhlán regiment, captain K. Lopyanovsky, who, using the only anti-tank rifle available in the regiment, damaged a tank moving along the railway bridge across the Neman.

During the fighting on September 21, the 20th motorized brigade was able to occupy the southwestern outskirts of the city, but failed to cross the Neman due to strong rifle and machine-gun fire from the opposite bank. By evening, the 4th Cavalry Division approached the city, and it was decided to repeat the attack in the morning. However, given the results of the battles, the commander of the defense, a retired brigade general

V.Ya. Przewdzhetský at about 4 p.m. ordered to withdraw to the north. On the night of September 22, the Polish defenders of Grodno left the city, and in the morning it was occupied by Soviet units, who fought for the city at a cost of 57 killed, 159 wounded, 19 tanks and 4 armored vehicles were knocked out. 644 corpses were buried on the battlefield, 1,543 enemy soldiers were taken prisoner, 514 rifles, 50 revolvers, 146 machine guns, 1 anti-aircraft gun, 1 mortar became Soviet trophies. In the meantime, having received an order to occupy Sokulka, but having no fuel, the 2nd tank brigade was forced to create a detachment under the command of Captain Novikov, consisting of 43 tanks, a motorized rifle company and an anti-tank artillery platoon, to which all available fuel was transferred. Departing at 7 o'clock from Volkovysk, the detachment at 14 o'clock on September 20 occupied Sokulka, abandoned the day before by the German units. The 11th Cavalry Division and the 5th Rifle Corps advanced west and southwest from Volko-800

vysk.

In the second echelon, the troops of the 10th Army advanced behind the KMG, which crossed the border on September 19 with the task of reaching the Novogrudok, Gorodishche front and moving further to the Palace. By the end of the first day of the offensive, the troops of the 10th Army reached the line of the Neman and Usha rivers. Continuing the slow advance in the second echelon of the Belorussian Front, by the end of September 20, the army troops reached the line of Naliboki, Derevna, Mir, where they received the task of advancing to the front of Sokulka, Bolshaya Berestovitsa, Svisloch, Novy Dvor, Pruzhany. In the evening, by order of the commander of the Belorussian Front No. 04 of the ar

the troops of the 5th rifle, 6th cavalry and 15th tank corps were subordinated. However, during the negotiations between the commanders of the 10th Army, KMG and the Belorussian Front on September 21, it was decided to leave the 6th Cavalry and 15th Tank Corps as part of KMG801

On the front of the 4th Army, which had the task of advancing on Baranovichi with access to the line of Snov, Zhilichi by the end of the first day of the operation, the offensive began at 5 o'clock in the morning on September 17. At 22:00, the 29th Tank Brigade occupied Baranovichi and the fortified area located here, which was not occupied by Polish troops. The tank battalion under the command of I.D. was the first to enter the city. Chernyakhovsky. Up to 5 thousand Polish soldiers were captured in the Baranovichi region, 4 anti-tank guns and 2 food echelons became Soviet trophies. The 8th Rifle Division occupied Nesvizh and advanced as far as Snuva, while the 143rd Rifle Division occupied Kletsk. By the end of September 18, the 29th and 32nd tank brigades, moving along the Baranovichi-Kobrin highway, reached the river. Shchara, the 8th Rifle Division passed Baranovichi, and the 143rd Rifle Division advanced to Sinyavka. By the end of September 19, the 29th tank brigade entered Pruzhany, where it remained until September 22, the 32nd tank brigade - in Minki on the Baranovichi-Kobrin highway, the 8th rifle division reached the river. Shchara, and the 143rd Rifle Division - Olkhovka-Gorodishche region. At 9 pm on September 20, the 32nd Tank Brigade entered Kobrin, the 8th Rifle Division entered Ruzhany, and the 143rd Rifle Division entered Ivatsevich.

The 29th tank brigade, which remained on the outskirts of Pruzhany, on September 20 was engaged in a technical inspection of tanks and conducted reconnaissance in the direction of Brest. Vidomlya had contact with the German units. As the brigade commander, brigade commander S.M. Krivo-shein, "reconnaissance, sent forward under the command of Vladimir Yulianovich Borovitsky, secretary of the party commission of the brigade, soon returned with a dozen soldiers and officers [6 soldiers and 2 officers] of the German motorized corps of General Guderian, who managed to occupy the city of Brest. Having no precise instructions on how to deal with the Germans, I asked the chief of staff to contact the commander [Chuikov], and I myself engaged in a non-committal conversation with the commissar. The conversation took place in Lenin's tent, where, along with indicators of combat training and the growth of our country's industrial power, posters were hanging on folding portable stands calling for the destruction of fascism. Many Germans had cameras. After looking around, they asked permission to photograph the tent and those present in it. One of them took a photo of me and the commissar in a group of German officers against the backdrop of an anti-fascist poster ... Having fed the Germans with rich Russian borscht and kara-style shish kebab (the guests

ate all this with enviable zeal), we sent them home, instructing them to send a "warm greetings" to the general Guderian." The brigade commander forgot to mention that during dinner the brigade band played several marches. During September 21, the 32nd Tank Brigade with 25 infantrymen attached to it, as a result of a battle with a detachment of Poles of 300 people with machine guns and anti-tank guns, occupied Gorodets on the Royal (Dneprovsko-Bug) Canal, losing 6 people killed, 2 wounded and 3 tanks. One of these tanks was sent as a reconnaissance to Anto-pol, where he entered into battle with the Poles, who managed to break the caterpillar. The crew, consisting of Mukhin, Efimov and Lagovsky, refused the offer to surrender and fired to the last opportunity. Pouring the tank with gasoline and overlaying it with brushwood, the Poles set fire to the car. The crew died. The 8th Rifle Division entered Pruzhany on the same day, and the 143rd Division entered Kartuz Bereza. Troops of the 23rd Rifle Corps were deployed in Polesie, who were forbidden to cross the border until further notice. The appeal of the

corps commander to the Military Council of the Belorussian Front with a request to go on the offensive along with the rest of the troops of the front was rejected. As a result, the corps crossed the border at 16.25 on September 18. At 11 a.m. on September 19, the advance detachment of the 52nd Infantry Division occupied Lakhva. Moving on, the Soviet troops in Kozhan-Gorodok were fired upon by a detachment of the 16th battalion of the KOP. Having turned around, the units entered the battle and soon pushed the Poles into the forest north of Kozhan-Gorodok. During the battle, the Soviet units lost 3 people killed and 4 wounded. 85 Polish soldiers were taken prisoner, 3 of them were wounded and 4 were killed. At about 5 p.m., the 205th Infantry Regiment with the 1st Battalion of the 158th Artillery Regiment occupied David-Gorodok after a small battle. At 19.30, units of the 52nd Infantry Division occupied Luninets. In the meantime, the ships of the Soviet Dnieper flotilla reached the mouth of the Goryn River, where they were forced to stop due to shallows and flooded Polish ships.

In the meantime, a motorized detachment was

created consisting of 1 rifle company, 2 batteries and a howitzer artillery regiment division under the command of the chief of staff of the division, Colonel Kuzmin, who reached the river by 4 p.m. on September 20. Yaselda. Having prevented the explosion of the railway bridge, the detachment crossed the Yaselda on it and entered Pinsk at about 19 o'clock. However, crossing the river Pinu in the city was stopped by the explosion of the bridge after the passage

on it the lead tank. At night, single shots were heard in the city center, and only the approach of the main forces of the 52nd Infantry Division made it possible on the morning of September 21 to comb the city and clear it of the enemy, capturing 205 Polish soldiers. Soviet losses amounted to 4 people killed, 5 wounded, and 2 Red Army soldiers were captured, but were recaptured from the enemy on September 23. Meanwhile in

At 4 p.m. on September 20, in the Dubovichi region, with the help of local residents, a Polish border detachment with a force of 130 people was surrounded and captured. From September 21, the 23rd Rifle Corps was

subordinated to the 4th Army. At 14:00 on September 22,

Soviet troops occupied Ivanovo (Yanovo)803 . The troops of the Ukrainian Front also crossed the Polish border on September 17 and began to move deep into Poland. On the northern flank on the front from Olevsk to Yampol, the troops of the 5th Army deployed, which was tasked with "delivering a powerful and lightning strike against the Polish troops, resolutely and quickly advancing in the direction of Rovno." The 60th Infantry Division, which had the task of advancing on Sarny, concentrated in the Olevsk region. In the area of Gorodnitsa-Korets, the troops of the 15th Rifle Corps deployed, which had the immediate task of reaching the river. Goryn, and by the end of September 17, take Rovno. The 8th Rifle Corps, deployed in the Ostrog-Slavuta region, was supposed to take Dubno by the end of the day. On September 18, both corps were to

occupy Lutsk and move towards Vladimir-Volynsky. At 0500, the troops of the 5th Army crossed the border, breaking the insignificant resistance of the Polish border units. Only in the region of the Ustya did the garrison of the Polish guard No. 11 try to resist the 16th Infantry Regiment of the 87th Infantry Division. In the battle, the enemy lost 1 man killed, 2 wounded, and 6 surrendered. To the north, units of the 60th Infantry Division crossed the border at 6.00, during the battle with the Polish border guards, Soviet troops lost 1 man killed and 1 wounded. The enemy lost 3 border guards killed, 2 wounded, and 83 were taken prisoner. During the day, it turned out that "the enemy, having not offered resistance at the state border, is retreating to the west, not trying to organize and offer resistance." In such an environment, the bulk of the troops of the 5th Army advanced westward in marching order, having practically no skirmishes with the enemy. By the morning of September 19, the 60th Infantry Division reached the Sarnensky UR, starting battles for capturing it. The Soviet units had to fight against enemy pillboxes on the right bank of the river. Case. During two days of fighting, Soviet troops broke through the UR on the Tynne-Knyaz-Selo front and on September 21 entered Sarny, from where the Polish units retreated to Polesie. Until September 25, the 60th division cleared the Sarny UR from

weapons and ammunition. Around 18.00 September 17, the advance detachment of the 45th Infantry Division occupied Rovno, where small Polish units were disarmed. The 87th Rifle Division of the 15th Rifle Corps, advancing to the north, on September 19, in the Kostopol area, entered into battle with the enemy with a force of up to 2 infantry regiments with artillery. During the battle, the Polish detachment was defeated and up to 1.5 thousand

25 guns became Soviet trophies. The formations of the corps continued marching to the west, advancing after the retreating groups of Polish border guards, gendarmes and siegemen. At 04:00 on September 21, the reconnaissance battalion of the 45th Infantry Division entered Kovel. The units of the Polish troops located in the city did not offer organized resistance and retreated to the west. It was not possible to disarm them due to the lack of sufficient forces. The police put up resistance, the latter firing from attics. The soldiers of the Polish army do not want to fight the Red Army." On September 21-22, the 87th Infantry Division at the line of Navuz, Borovichi ran into a fortified enemy and fought with groups of the 3rd Polish Infantry Regiment. "On September 21, a reconnaissance battalion and a tank company at the entrance to the village of Na-vuz were fired upon by machine-gun fire and anti-tank guns. The reconnaissance battalion and tank company retreated with some losses. Units of the 16th Infantry Regiment, the 43rd Reconnaissance Battalion, the 212th Howitzer Artillery Regiment and the 71st Anti-tank Battalion were thrown into the battle. In the battle on September 21-22 at the Nameless Hill in Navuz, the enemy was destroyed. The rest were pursued to Borovichi. As a result of the battle, the Poles had 260 people killed and wounded and 120 prisoners", 1 45-mm gun and 3 heavy machine guns were knocked out. The losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 99 people killed, 137 wounded. At 14:00, the Poles began to retreat towards Kolka and north to Polissya, and at about 15:00, the retreating units were bombed by 9 SB aircraft.

The 36th Tank Brigade, advancing in the first echelon of the 8th Rifle Corps, moved towards Dubno, but on the first day of the offensive, the tankers tried not to break away from the rifle units, experiencing difficulties with the delivery of fuel. In the town of Mirogoshcha, 2 armored vehicles under the command of senior lieutenant Aksyonov stopped 4 echelons with Polish troops. While one armored vehicle held the lead locomotive at gunpoint, Aksyonov entered into negotiations with the Polish head of the echelons and told him that in the event of an attempt to withdraw the echelons to the west, he would call in aircraft and tanks hiding in an ambush.



This bluff forced the Poles to refuse to send trains. By the morning of September 18, 5 tanks approached Aksenov, and the Poles surrendered.

Meanwhile, the 36th Tank Brigade occupied Dubno at 07:00 on September 18, where the rear units of the 18th and 26th Polish infantry divisions were disarmed. In total, 6 thousand military personnel were captured, 12 guns, 70 machine guns, 3 thousand rifles, 50 vehicles and 6 echelons with weapons became trophies of the Soviet troops. At 11.00 September 18, after a small battle, Soviet troops entered Rogaczow, where 200 Polish soldiers were captured and 4 echelons with equipment and ammunition were captured. By 17.00 on September 18, the 36th tank brigade and the reconnaissance battalion of the 45th rifle division entered Lutsk, in the area of which up to 9 thousand Polish military personnel were disarmed and taken prisoner, and 7 thousand rifles, 40 machine guns, 1 tank and 4 echelons of military equipment. On the morning of the next day, the 36th tank brigade moved to Torchin, from which, at about 17.30, it set out for Vladimir-Volynsky and at 23.30, after a small battle with the Poles in the area of the barracks of the cornet school and the 27th artillery regiment, entered the city. On the morning of September 20, the brigade commander Bogomolov negotiated with the head of the Polish garrison, General M. Smoravinsky, about the conditions for the surrender of the city. As a result, during the day the garrison was disarmed. Until September 23, the 36th tank brigade remained on the outskirts of Vladimir-Volynsky, disarming groups of Polish troops approaching the city. Meanwhile, formations of the 8th Rifle Corps on September 19-20 were pulled up to Vladimir-Volynsky and on September 22 they reached the Vladimir-Volynsky-Sokal front. During these marches, up to 10,000 Polish troops were disarmed in the Verba area.

By the end of September 22, the troops of the 5th Army reached the Kovel-Rozhitsa-Vladimir-Volynsky-Ivani line. To the south,

at the Teofipol-Voitovtsy front, the troops of the 6th Army deployed, with the task of advancing on Tarnopol, Ezerna and Kozova, in the future to go to the front Busk-Przemyslyany and further to Lvov. At 04:00 on September 17, an assault group of border guards and Red Army soldiers captured the Volochinsky border bridge. At 04:30, the troops of the 17th Rifle Corps launched an artillery strike on

enemy firing points and strongholds, and at 05:00 they began to force the river. Zbruch, using the captured bridge and established crossings. Having crossed the river practically without any enemy resistance, parts of the 17th Rifle Corps about

8.00 turned into marching columns and moved towards Tarnopol. Mobile formations quickly overtook the infantry, and after 1800 on September 17, the 10th tank brigade entered Tarnopol. The 24th Tank Brigade advancing north of the city with the 136th Infantry Regiment of the 97th Infantry Division passed Dobrovody at 12 noon and, bypassing Tarnopol from the northwest, about

At 22:00, it reached its western outskirts and began to clear it of Polish units. At 7 pm, 11 tanks of the 5th Cavalry Division of the 2nd Cavalry Corps entered the city from the north, however, not knowing the situation, the tankers decided to wait until the morning to attack. Having entered Tarnopol,

The 5th division had to deal with clearing the City of disparate groups of Polish officers, gendarmes and those who simply wanted to shoot from the local population. During skirmishes in the city between 10.20 and 14.00 on September 18, the division lost 3 people killed and 37 wounded. At the same time at 10.30 rifle divisions of the 17th rifle corps entered the city. Up to 600 Polish soldiers were taken prisoner. The formations of the 2nd Cavalry Corps advancing north from the morning of September 18 crossed the river.

Seret and at 10.00 received an order from the command of the Ukrainian Front to move to Lvov with a forced march and capture the city. Since the cavalry needed rest, the corps commander created a consolidated motorized detachment of 600 dismounted cavalymen mounted on tanks of the 5th cavalry division and a battalion of the 24th tank brigade under the command of the commander of the 5th cavalry division brigade commander I. Sharaburko. The detachment moved to Lvov, capturing up to 6 thousand Polish soldiers along the way. The remaining troops of the 6th Army, as far as possible, also moved towards Lvov, which on September 12-18 was engulfed by the 1st and 2nd mountain infantry divisions of the Wehrmacht from the north, west and south. During the marches, the 14th Cavalry Division near Sasuva broke the resistance of the local garrison and the police, capturing 1,155 people and capturing 1,200 rifles. At night

on

On September 19, a column of Polish troops approached the city from Brody, which was also disarmed. IN 12,096 people were taken prisoner, the trophies of the Soviet troops were

12 thousand rifles, 26 guns, 275 machine guns, 32 vehicles and 1,200 horses. By the morning of September 19, the 2nd cavalry corps occupied Zlochuv, and by the evening of September 20, the 14th cavalry division reached Yarychev, Barshchevsh, and the 3rd cavalry division - Kalinovki, Byalka Shlyakhetskaya, 8 km from Lvov. At 1 \* 6.20 the 2nd Cavalry Corps were subordinated

38th, 10th tank brigades and a combined detachment of the 97th and 96th rifle divisions. Preparations began for the assault on the city, scheduled for 9 am on September 21.

In the meantime, a combined motorized detachment of the

2nd Cavalry Corps and the 24th Tank Brigade with 35 tanks approached Lvov around 02:00 on September 19.

"When approaching the city, the Polish artillery opened fire. Overcoming street barricades, the head reconnaissance battalion [consisting of 6 tanks] reached the center of the city and was met by fire from a battery standing near the church. The first tank was hit. The commander of the reconnaissance company, senior lieutenant comrade. Chufarov, knocking down a gun near the church, set fire to enemy shells with a shot. Gun servants fled, and the officers shouted "do not shoot." Rifle-machine-gun and revolver fire was opened on the tanks from the barracks and many houses. Tanks fired at flashes. By 4.30 the fire had ceased on both sides. At 4.20 the brigade commander [Colonel P.S. Fotchenkov], while in a tank in Lvov, received a note from the commander of the 2nd rank comrade through his delegate car. Gorodovikov's order: the 24th Tank Brigade to stop at Zloczow and wait for further orders. The brigade commander did not know the reasons for such an order. He assumed that instructions had been received from above to cancel the first order to seize Lvov. At 0500, the brigade commander gave the order to the reconnaissance battalion, remaining in the city, to close the exits of the eastern outskirts of Lvov. The rest of the tanks go to the eastern outskirts of Vinniki (near the city of Lvov).

The head of the 2nd unit, captain Shurenkov, should contact the Polish headquarters and call the head of the Lvov garrison to negotiate the surrender of the city. At 06:00 on September 19, the units took their places and began to disarm the Polish troops approaching Lvov to help, and the reconnaissance battalion disarmed the barracks in the city of Lvov itself. At 0630, two Polish majors arrived at the brigade commander for negotiations. The brigade commander refused to negotiate with them and ordered the head of the garrison or the chief of staff to appear. At 07:00 on September 19, the colonel and two other majors arrived, with whom there were also no negotiations. At 7.40 arrived the chief of staff of the garrison, Colonel of the General Staff [B. Rakovsky] and with him two colonels and three majors. The brigade commander introduced himself as the commander of the tank corps, which surrounded the city of Lvov, and offered to surrender the city of Lvov. The chief of staff of the garrison asked to wait, as he is not authorized to do this and must receive instructions from above. All this was given 2 hours. The brigade commander demanded that the tanks located in the city and on the outskirts continue to remain [there] and permission to occupy command posts to monitor the German positions, which adjoined the city in a semicircle. This was agreed to. We agreed to mutually exchange communications delegates. At 8.30 the Germans unexpectedly launched an attack on the western and southern outskirts of the city. At the same time, the tanks and armored vehicles of the reconnaissance battalion were between two fires (Germans and Poles).

The brigade commander sent an armored car to the Germans with a piece of undershirt on a stick. Tanks and armored vehicles threw out red and white flags, but the fire on them from both sides did not stop, then fire was opened on the enemy from armored vehicles and tanks. At the same time, 3 anti-tank guns were shot down from the Germans, 2 majors and 1 officer were killed, 9 soldiers were wounded. We have hit 2 armored vehicles and 1 tank, killed 3 people and wounded 4 people. Soon the fire was stopped, the commander of the 137th regiment of the German mountain division, Colonel [von Schlammer], arrived with an armored car, with whom the brigade commander at the German headquarters agreed on all controversial issues. We picked up our wounded and dead, and they

their own.

During September 19 and 20, repeated negotiations were held between the command of the 24th light tank brigade, on the one hand, and representatives of the command of the German mountain division, on the other, on the cessation of hostilities and the elimination of conflicts that had arisen. As a result of the negotiations, normal relations between the contracting parties were finally restored. After that, there were no misunderstandings between the units of the 24th Tank Brigade and the

units of the German Mountain Rifle Division. Parts of the German division began to withdraw in a westerly direction, conducting rearguard battles with the Polish troops. During the negotiations, the commander of the artillery of the Ukrainian Front, brigade commander N.D. Yakovlev with the German command, the parties demanded from each other to withdraw troops from the city and not interfere with its assault. By the evening of September 20, the German troops received an order to move away from Lvov. Nevertheless, the Wehrmacht command again demanded that the Poles surrender the city no later than 10 o'clock on September 21: "If you surrender Lviv to

us, you will remain in Europe, if you surrender to the Bolsheviks, you will become Asia forever." On the night of September 21, the German units began to retreat from Lvov, and their positions were occupied by Soviet troops, preparing for an attack on the city, scheduled for the next morning.

The plan for storming the city was as follows: the 14th cavalry division was to attack the city from the north and northeast, the combined detachment of the 17th rifle corps with the 38th tank brigade - from the east; The 5th Cavalry Division, together with the 10th Tank Brigade, from the southeast, and the 3rd Cavalry Division from the south and southwest.

Since negotiations with the Polish command did not give any results, it was decided to attack the city at 9.00 on September 21. At the appointed time, the Soviet troops moved towards the city, but the Polish command resumed negotiations, and the Soviet units were returned to their original position. At 17 o'clock, near the yeast factory on the eastern outskirts of the city, the commander of the Polish garrison, General V. Lyangner, Lieutenant Colonel K. Ryzhinsky, Major Y. Yavich, Captain K. Chikhirin met with brigade commanders P.A. Kurochkin and N.D. Yakovlev, brigade commissar K.V. Krainyukov, Colonel Fotchenkov, Regimental Commissar Makarov and I.A. Serov. During the negotiations, it turned out that the Polish garrison was ready to capitulate, but this should be done in an organized manner. Returning to the city, at about 20 o'clock Langner announced at a meeting of the defense command about the decision to surrender the city to the Soviets. Most of the officers were in favor of ending the fighting. On September 21, the commander of the 6th Army issued an

order: **"The enemy is holding the last stronghold, point on his territory - the city of Lvov. The defense of the city is led by a fascist organization. The principle of defense is circular, with street barricades and partially mined driveways. Eastern Group of Forces**

**9.00 22.9.39 attacks the enemy with the task of breaking his resistance, forcing him to lay down his arms and surrender, "but he did not have to fulfill it. At 0800 hours on September 22, Lyangner arrived at the headquarters of the 24th Tank Brigade in Vinniki with the proposals drawn up the day before for negotiations. As a result of the last round of negotiations at 11.00, an agreement was signed on the "transfer of the city of Lvov to the troops of the Soviet Union." According to paragraph 8 of the agreement, the officers of the Polish troops were guaranteed "personal freedom and inviolability of their personal property. Departures to foreign countries are permitted to them by local authorities together with representatives of the diplomatic authorities of the given state.**

At 14:00, Polish troops began to lay down their arms, and at 15:00 formations of the 2nd Soviet Cavalry Corps on foot, together with the tanks of the 24th, 38th, and 10th tank brigades, entered the city. In general, the garrison complied with the surrender agreement, only separate groups of officers opened fire from the barricades in several places. With the help of tanks, resistance was quickly crushed. By the evening of September 23, order was restored in the city and the main forces of the Soviet troops were withdrawn to its

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outskirts.

On the southern flank of the Ukrainian Front in the Satanov-r. The Dniester was deployed by the 12th Army, which had the task of occupying Monastyriska, Kolomyia, and the next day Stanislavov and Galich, further advancing to Stry and Drohobych. At 5.00, the army troops began to force the river. Zbruch. The rains that had passed the day before had washed away the roads, and the water level in the river had risen. Nevertheless, by the evening of September 17, the army troops reached the river. Strypa. The 23rd tank brigade, having crossed the Zbruch at 8.30, moved through Borshchev to Gorodenka and Kolomyia. By 16.00 tankers crossed the Dniester ford and captured 6 Polish aircraft near Gorodenka. On September 18, the 23rd Tank Brigade entered Kolomyia, where up to 10,000 Polish servicemen from the 24th and the remnants of the 2nd and 5th Infantry Divisions were disarmed. At 2.00 on September 19, the brigade received an order to occupy Stanislavov and moved towards it, overcoming the rubble on the road. On the same day, at 14 o'clock, the tanks reached Stanislavov and moved towards Galich, which they approached in the evening of the same day. On the following day, the 23rd Tank Brigade reached Stryi on 21 September through Kalush, Dolyna, and Bolekhiv.

On the night of September 17, the 4th Cavalry Corps, advancing on the right wing of the army, sent advanced reconnaissance groups to Polish territory in order to disrupt communications and capture languages. However, the groups found themselves and suffered losses in skirmishes with the Polish border guards, without completing the task. As a result, when crossing Zbruch

The 4th Cavalry Corps met organized resistance from the Polish border guards and was forced to fight on the border for 2 hours. Only having overcome the zone of border barriers, the corps got the opportunity to develop an offensive on Podgaitsy and by the evening of September 17 reached the river. Strypa in the Sokoluva region. Meanwhile, the 13th Rifle Corps reached the Dniester, and the 5th Cavalry Corps reached Tribukhovitsa, Duliba. At 19.30, the 25th Panzer Corps occupied Chort-kov after a short battle, capturing up to 200 Polish soldiers of the 41st Infantry Regiment and capturing 4 aircraft. The next day, formations of the 4th Cavalry

and 13th Rifle Corps surrounded and after a short battle captured up to 10 thousand Polish troops from the remnants of the Poznenskaya, 6th and 22nd Infantry Divisions. The 25th Panzer Corps, with its 1st Motorized Brigade, occupied Monastyriska at 4 p.m., where about 3,600 Polish troops were taken prisoner. By evening, the 1st motorized and 4th tank brigades approached Podgaitsy, and the 5th tank brigade at Dombrov fought with the Polish artillery regiment, during

which 2,500 Polish soldiers were taken prisoner, and went to the outskirts of Galich. On September 19, units of the 25th Panzer Corps occupied Galich, capturing the bridges across the Dniester, Zavadka and Zbora intact. On September 19, the 4th Cavalry Corps went to the Rogatin, Burshtyn area, where he received a day's rest. The 26th tank brigade entered the area of Galich, Bolshovtsy. The forward detachments of the 13th Rifle Corps advanced towards Stanislavov. On the same day, the corps was subordinated to the commander of the border troops of the NKVD KVO, commander Osokin, who received the order of the Military Council on September 19

veto of the Ukrainian Front "immediately close the border" in order to "prevent in any case the departure of Polish soldiers and officers from Poland to Romania"<sup>806</sup>. On September 21, the main forces of the corps were deployed along the border with Romania and Hungary from the river. Zbruch to Beskydy. The 25th

Panzer and 5th Cavalry Corps in the Galich region fought with the remnants of the 26th and 28th Polish divisions and captured up to 20 thousand Poles. The 13th Rifle Corps was occupied by Stanislavov and Kalush, capturing up to 11,000 Polish troops. At 13.00 on September 20, the 25th Panzer Corps was given the task of reaching the Lisiatyche, Stryi area by evening, and occupying Drogo-bych with an advanced detachment. But at 4 p.m., on the outskirts of Stryi, it became known that the city was occupied by German troops, so

The 25th Panzer Corps settled down to rest. At 3 p.m. on September 20, the corps was given a new task - to concentrate at Zhuravno, where to prepare crossings across the Dniester to support the 4th Cavalry Corps against the enemy's Lvov grouping. However, the Soviet troops operating near Lvov did not need help, and the 25th Panzer Corps, which concentrated in the Lukovets, Lubsha, Mazuruvka area, on September 22 received an order to move to Podgortsy and further to Komar-no. On the night of September 23, on the night of September 23, the units of the corps met with units of the 2nd Mountain Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht and were stopped.

On September 20, the troops of the 12th Army advanced to the Nikolaev-Stryi line. In the Stryi region, at about 1700, contact was made with German troops, who on September 22 handed over the city to the Red Army. On September 23, the 26th tank brigade approached the same place. As a result of the negotiations, the Soviet troops were stopped on the reached line.<sup>807</sup> **Moscow-Berlin**

Immediately after the

entry of the Red Army into Poland, a new round of diplomatic negotiations with Germany began in Moscow. Already on the evening of September 18, in a conversation with Schulenburg, Stalin unexpectedly announced that "the Soviet side has certain doubts as to whether the German high command will adhere to the Moscow agreement at the appropriate time and whether it will return to the line that was determined in Moscow." Schulenburg replied that "Germany is, of course, determined to comply with the terms of the Moscow agreements." To this, Stalin stated that "he has no doubts about the good intentions of the German government. His concern was based on the well-known fact that all military men hate to return the territories they have occupied." German diplomats categorically rejected his fears and declared that the Wehrmacht was subject to the orders of the Führer and all agreements with Moscow would be strictly observed<sup>808</sup>.

For its part, the Soviet leadership proposed its own version of a joint statement, which approved by Berlin. The next day, a Soviet-German communiqué was published:

**: "In order to avoid any kind of unfounded rumors about the tasks of the Soviet and German troops operating in Poland, the government of the USSR and the government of Germany declare that the actions of these troops do not pursue any goal that runs counter to the interests of Germany or the Soviet Union and is contrary to the spirit and letter of the pact on non-aggression concluded between Germany and the USSR. The task of these troops, on the contrary, is to restore order and tranquility in Poland, disturbed by the collapse of the Polish state, and to help the people of Poland reorganize the conditions of their state existence.**

<sup>809</sup>.

On the evening of September 19, Molotov summoned Schulenburg and told him that "the head of the Wehrmacht's operations department, Warlimont, yesterday showed the acting Soviet military attaché in Berlin a map showing the future "Reich border". It runs along the Vistula, goes through Warsaw, but further on it is plotted so that Lvov remains on the German side. This is contrary to the Moscow agreements and surprises the Soviet government. Schulenburg replied that there had been a misunderstanding, since the map apparently showed a temporary demarcation line, nevertheless he requested instructions from Berlin<sup>810</sup>. On the same day, Molotov told Schulenburg that it was time for both governments to finally determine the structure of the Polish territories. Whereas earlier the Soviet government intended to preserve the existence of the remnants of Poland, now it is ready to divide Poland along the line of four rivers. "The Soviet government wishes to immediately start negotiations on this issue and

hold them in Moscow, since such negotiations on the Soviet side are obliged to be carried out by persons endowed with supreme power who cannot leave the Soviet

Union . Having received a message at 2.00 on September 17 that the Red Army had crossed the Polish border, the German command at 7.00 ordered the troops to stop on the Skole-Lviv-Vladimir-Volynsky-Brest-Bialystok line<sup>812</sup>. 20 September Hitler established the "final demarcation line" to which they were to withdraw German troops: Uzhoksky pass-Khy-rov-Przemysl-r. San-r. Vistula River Narev - r. Pissa—the border of the Reich As G. Guderian noted in his memoirs, leaving<sup>813</sup> Brest to the Russians "we considered unprofitable"<sup>814</sup> . On the same day in the evening, Molotov, in a conversation with Schulenburg, stated that the Soviet government could not approve this line from Przemysl to Turka and the Uzhoksky Pass, but insisted on a line along the upper reaches of the river. San. It must be taken into account that this is Ukrainian territory. In exchange for it, the Soviet government "is ready to cede Suwalki and the surrounding area with the railway, but not Augustow"<sup>815</sup> . In addition, Molotov proposed the text of the Soviet-German communique on the Soviet-German demarcation line in Poland, which did not arouse objections in Berlin. The German side agreed to the transfer of Suwalki to it in exchange for territory along the upper reaches of the river. San, but also tried to get Augustow with the surrounding forests<sup>816</sup> . The German and Soviet command

maintained contacts through military attachés<sup>817</sup> . From the night of September 20, 1939, the German military attache in Moscow, Lieutenant-General E. Kestring, tried to resolve the situation near Lvov. At 00.30 Kestring telephoned:

"1. East of Lvov, Soviet tanks collided with German troops. There are victims. There is a dispute about the one who should take Lvov. Our troops cannot withdraw until the Polish troops are destroyed.

2. The German command asks: a) to take measures to resolve this issue by sending a delegate there; b) have some distinctive signs on the tanks; c) approach the demarcation line with caution <sup>818</sup>

lines" .

At 10.20, Kestring again telephoned the Soviet command: "I received a message from Berlin that the command of the Soviet tank troops had given the order to advance on Lvov. Part of our (German) troops is in Lvov. The main command of the German army asks the command of the Soviet troops and I ask the marshal to cancel the offensive of the Soviet tank troops, since this is unprofitable for us, because there are still Polish units to the right and left of us. If it is necessary to send delegates for negotiations, then the German high command will do this immediately and send its representatives by plane to any point on the instructions of the Soviet command. I ask you to immediately bring this to the attention of the marshal and urgently inform me of his decision.

At 11:20 a.m., Kestring telephoned the proposal of the German command to take the city in a joint assault with the Red Army, and then transfer it to the Soviet side<sup>819</sup> . However, Moscow's intransigence led to the fact that the German leadership ordered "to act together with the Russians", and it was decided that "German troops would clear Lvov." The command of the ground forces of the Wehrmacht took this decision as a "day of shame for the German political leadership"<sup>820</sup> . At 11.40 Kestring telephoned that "Hitler gave the order for the immediate withdrawal of German troops 10 km west of Lvov and hand Lvov over to the Russians." At 12.45 Kestring arrived at Voroshilov and assured him that, on Hitler's personal order, the Wehrmacht would be withdrawn 10 km west of Lvov. To Voroshilov's remark, "what caused such misunderstandings, reaching individual skirmishes on the part of the German troops, and while our troops were given clear and firm instructions on the line of conduct when meeting with the German troops, Kestring said that it was, unfortunately, local small incident and that all measures are taken to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in the future. As agreed in the presence of Ribbentrop, the line of the rivers Pissa, Narew, Vistula, San will not be disputed by anyone.

The map shown by the head of the operational department, Varlimont Belyakov, had a border line not in accordance with the agreement between the Soviet and German sides, and it cannot be considered a border line, but only a line that German troops should occupy. To the remark of the People's Commissar that on the map of Warlimont, which he showed Belyakov, there was a border line drawn from Warsaw along the Vistula and further east of Lvov, Kestring, clearly embarrassed and in a joking tone, said that Warlimont was not a politician and, perhaps, that he, like an oil worker, was tempted by oil, but that because of this they would not allow themselves to violate the agreement reached and that it was a small

incident. Koestring was instructed that today our troops will occupy the cities of Grodno, Bialystok, Lvov, the Tukhlovsky Pass, and that German troops should be withdrawn from this line today, about which the request to immediately notify the German command "821 .

During this conversation, Timoshenko reported to Voroshilov about the incident near Lvov by telephone from Proskurov; "Even at 4.00 on September 19, our units, the armored regiment and the cavalry regiment, entered the city of Lvov. At that time, there were no German troops in the city (the cavalry regiment did not enter the city, but remained hidden). Our two armored vehicles sent from Lvov along another road towards our troops suddenly came under artillery fire. Ours thought that these were Polish troops, and with the fire of 45-mm cannons and machine guns they knocked out two anti-tank guns, killing, according to the Germans, one officer and four soldiers. Then German representatives arrived from the headquarters of the 1st German mountain division and the 137th German regiment, where it turned out that the fire was fired by German troops, because they had no instructions from the German command. It was decided not to occupy Lviv and wait for instructions from the command of both sides. Our two armored vehicles with their glorious crews fought until the last moment and burned down (Kestring listened to this whole conversation on the phone)"822 . Voroshilov "draws

Koestring's attention to the inadmissibility of a repetition of such incidents in the future, since this is beneficial only to a third party and from this all sorts of correspondents can inflate a big fuss." Koestring "willingly agreed to this and repeated that the Führer himself had already intervened in this matter and that all measures would be taken to prevent such a thing from happening again." The German military attaché also "asked today to outline the lines and deadlines that must be abandoned by the German troops. Immediately Koestring took out a German map from his briefcase, where a solid line was drawn in black pencil, occupied by German troops. On the same map, along the rivers Pissa, Narew, Vistula, San, another line is drawn in blue pencil, exactly corresponding to the agreement. We agreed that today at 16 o'clock Comrade. Voroshilov will receive Kestring and the officers who have arrived to develop the lines and timing of the withdrawal of the German army . On September 20, 1939 at 16.20, negotiations began between Voroshilov and Shaposhnikov with representatives of the German

military command represented by General Kestring, Colonel G. Ashenbrenner and Lieutenant Colonel G. Krebs on the procedure for withdrawing German troops and advancing Soviet troops to the demarcation line. Initially, it was assumed that the movement of the Red Army to the west would begin on the morning of September 23, the troops would have to move at a 25-kilometer interval, and by the evening of October 3, the German troops would withdraw beyond the final demarcation line . During the next round of negotiations from 2 to 4 am on September 21, the deadlines for reaching the demarcation line were specified and the Soviet-German protocol was signed : ***again their movement to the west at dawn on September 23, 1939. § 2. Parts of the German army, starting from September 22, are withdrawn in such a way that, making a transition of about 20***

***kilometers every day, complete their withdrawal to the western bank of the river. the Vistula at Warsaw by the evening of October 3 and at Deblin by the evening of October 2; to the west bank of the river. Pissa by the evening of September 27, r. Narew, at Ostrolenok, by the evening of September 29 and at Pultusk by the evening of October 1; to the west bank of the river. San, near Przemyśl, by the evening of September 26 and to the western bank of the river. San, near Sanok and to the south, by the evening of September 28. §3. The movement of the troops of both armies must be organized in such a way that there is a distance between the advanced parts of the columns of the Red Army and the tail of the columns of the German Army, on average up to 25 kilometers.***

***Both sides organize their movement in such a way that units of the Red Army will reach the eastern bank by the evening of September 28. Pissa; by the evening of September 30 on the eastern coast. Narew Ostroleka and by the evening of October 2 at Pultusk; to the east bank of the river. Vistula at Warsaw by the evening of October 4 and at Deblin by the evening of October 3; to the east bank of the river. San at Przemyśl by the evening of September 27 and on the eastern bank of the river. San near Sanok and to the south by the evening of September 29.***

***§ 4. All questions that may arise during the transfer by the German Army and the reception by the Red Army of regions, points, cities, etc., are resolved by representatives of both sides on the spot, for which special delegates are assigned by the command on each main highway of movement of both armies.***

***In order to avoid possible provocations, sabotage from Polish gangs, etc., the German command takes the necessary measures in cities and places that pass to the Red Army units, to their safety, and pays special attention to ensuring that cities, towns and important military defensive and economic structures (bridges, airfields, barracks, warehouses, railway junctions, railway stations, telegraph, telephone, power plants, rolling stock, etc.), as in***

*them, and on the way to them, would have been preserved from damage and destruction until they were transferred to*

*representatives of the Red Army units. § 5. When German representatives turn to the Command of the Red Army for assistance in the destruction of Polish units or gangs that stand in the way of the movement of small units of German troops, the Command of the Red Army (chiefs of columns), if necessary, allocate the necessary forces to ensure the destruction of obstacles*

*lying in the way of movement, § 6. When German troops move to the west, the aviation of the German army can only fly in the valley of the rear guards of the columns of the German troops and at an altitude of no more than 500 meters, the aviation of the Red Army, when moving to the west of the columns of the Red Army, can only fly*

*up to the line of the vanguards of the columns Red Army and at an altitude of no higher than 500 meters. According to the occupation by both armies of the main demarcation*

*line along pp. Pissa, Narew, Vistula, r. San from the mouth to the source, the aviation of both armies does not fly over the above line* <sup>TM</sup>.

On September 21, at 13.50, General Kestring, Colonel Aschenbrenner and Lieutenant Colonel Krebs visited the Foreign Relations Department of the NPO and reported that in view of the ongoing fighting near Warsaw and west of Lvov, "Commander-in-Chief General Brauchitsch asks that all the deadlines for the withdrawal of troops in our joint protocol of September 21 be delayed for 24 hours, and in the direction of Pultusk until the evening of October 4th. This is also caused by the necessary time for the removal of the wounded and prisoners ... General Brauchitsch wants to withdraw his troops as soon as possible, but not to the detriment of organization and order. The Soviet command must also be interested in this. The Commander-in-Chief of the German troops

reported that he had taken measures to preserve the most

important objects on the transferred territory of the Red Army from destruction . Corresponding changes were made to the protocol every day

*transition, approximately 20 kilometers, finish your retreat to the western bank of the river. the Vistula at Warsaw by the evening of October 4 and at Deblin by the evening of October 3; to the west bank of the river. Pissa by the evening of September 28, p. Narew, at Ostrolenok, by the evening of September 30 and at Pultusk by the evening of October 4; to the west bank of the river. San, near Przemyśl, by the evening of September 27 and on the western bank of the river. San, near Sanok and to the south, by the evening of September 28*

*Both sides organize their movement in such a way that units of the Red Army come out by the evening of September 29 to the eastern bank of the river. Pissa; by the evening of October 1 on the eastern bank of the river. Narew at Ostrolek and by the evening of October 5 at Pultusk; to the east bank of the river. Vistula at Warsaw by the evening of October 5 and at Deblin by the evening of October 4; to the east bank of the river. Sanu Przemyśl by the evening of September 28 and on the eastern bank of the river. San near Sanok and to the south by the evening of September 30"* <sup>21</sup> .

At the same time, on September 20-22, a Soviet-German communiqué was agreed, and on September 23 published: Narew to its confluence with the Bug River, further along the Bug River until its confluence with the Vistula River, further along the Vistula River until the San River flows into it, and further along the San River to its sources .

### **Polish campaign of the Red Army: September 22 - October 1**

Meanwhile, at 10.30 on September 21, the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No.

parts to

20.00 September 20. The troops were tasked with

pulling up the lagging units and rear areas, establishing stable communications, being in a state of full combat readiness, being vigilant and taking measures to protect the rear areas and headquarters. In addition, the command of the Belorussian Front was allowed to continue the offensive in the Suwalki ledge . At 22.15 on September 21, the headquarters of the Belarussian and Ukrainian fronts received order No. 156 of the People's Commissar of Defense, which set out the contents of the Soviet-German protocol and allowed to start moving west from dawn on 23 September 830 . The next day, the Military Council of the Belorussian Front issued the appropriate order No. 0583'. On September 25, the troops received the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 011 and the order of the Military Council of the Belorussian Front No. 06, warning that "when the army moves from the reached line of Augustow-Bialystok-Brest-Litovsk to the west in the territory left by the German army, it is possible that the Poles will crumble collect units into detachments and gangs, which, together with the Polish troops operating near Warsaw, can offer us stubborn resistance and in places deliver counterattacks" <sup>832</sup> .

On September 21, the 2nd Tank Brigade in Sokulka formed a detachment for operations in the Augustow-Suwalki area under the command of Major F.P. Dude, in which there were 470 people, 252 rifles, 74 machine guns, 46 guns, 34 BT-7.6 armored vehicles and 34 vehicles. Moving north, at about 5 o'clock on September 22, at Sopotskin, the detachment caught up with the Poles retreating from Grodno, who hoped to gain a foothold in the old forts of the Grodno fortress, where there were military depots. In the ensuing battle, which lasted up to 10 hours, 11 Red Army soldiers were killed and 14 wounded, 4 tanks and 5 vehicles were

knocked out. The enemy made extensive use of Molotov cocktails, which created significant problems in the conditions of tank operations without infantry cover. Ammunition exploded on one of the vehicles, and the Red Army men G.S. jumped out of it. Satkovsky, S.G. Shitalko and I.A. Shatko were surrounded by the Poles, captured and shot. However, they missed Satkovsky, and he, pretending to be killed, was able to wait for his own. 60 Polish soldiers were taken prisoner, the rest went into the forests. Trying to leave with his family by car to Lithuania, Brigade General Y. Olshina-

Vilchinsky met Chuvakin's detachment on the way. By order of the commissar of the detachment, Grigorenko, the general and his adjutant were shot. The general's wife was allowed into Lithuania. Departing at 20 o'clock from Sopotskin, the detachment at 1 o'clock in the morning on September 23 went to the Augustow Canal. The Poles burned the bridge, but the scouts found a ford 4 km west of Vulka-Rzadov; moving there, the detachment got involved in a firefight near the burned bridge. In the meantime, 19 people under the command of Major Belikov crossed the canal on a raft made of gates removed from the barn, reinforced with logs, went behind enemy lines and cleared the bridge from him. Having covered the burnt part of the bridge with earth, the detachment was able to transport the motorized infantry and cavalry along it, and the tanks crossed the canal ford, and moved to the Sejny. At this time, the motorcycle detachment of the 16th Rifle Corps at 20.20 on September 23 occupied Augustow without a fight, and the next day at 14.30 entered Suwalki. Meanwhile, a detachment of the 27th tank brigade

of 20 BT-7 tanks and 1 armored vehicle under the command of Major Bogdanov was combing the border line with Lithuania and arrived in Suwalki at 24:00 on September 24. At 8 o'clock on September 23, a battalion of the 101st Infantry Regiment set out from Grodno in vehicles, which by 13 o'clock reached the Augustow Canal and began forcing it. Following him, units of the 4th Cavalry Division advanced, the 77th Cavalry Regiment of which was on the river. Shlyamitsa at Kolet was attacked by the enemy at 17 o'clock, but, having received support from the battalion of the 101st Infantry Regiment, counterattacked and began to pursue the Poles retreating to the north. As a result, the enemy, having lost up to 150 people killed and a lot of weapons, was scattered through the forest. About 500 people were taken prisoner. The Soviet units lost 1 man killed and 5 wounded. At the same time, the 109th cavalry regiment in the forests southeast of Augustow captured about 200 Polish soldiers and a lot of weapons. By evening, the Soviet units entered the Sejny. At 7 o'clock on September 25, the 109th cavalry regiment entered Suwalki. Meanwhile, the 20th motorized brigade occupied Dombrovo on September 23, and on September 24, 833, after a small battle, Gonyondz

The troops of the 3rd Army continued to guard the Latvian and Lithuanian borders from Drissa to Druskeninkai. The 11th Army began redeployment along the Lithuanian border to Grodno. Formations of the 16th Rifle Corps continued to advance towards Grodno and on September 21 occupied Eishishki. By September 24, the troops of the corps deployed on the Lithuanian and German borders north and north-west of Grodno. Late at night on September 23, the 22nd Tank Brigade, transferred to the 11th Army, reached Shchuchin on the Lida-Grodno highway. Replaced by units of the 16th Rifle Corps, the 4th Cavalry Division moved along the border with East Prussia and on September 29 occupied Staviski and Lomza, where 1,600 corpses of civilians were recovered from the ruins - victims of the Luftwaffe bombing. From

15:00 on September 23, the 3rd Cavalry Corps set out from Vilna to Grodno, having the task of combing the territory along the Lithuanian border. At 8 o'clock on September 25, in the Saltanishki area, parts of the corps collided with a detachment of Captain Dombrovsky, numbering 150 horsemen. During the battle, the detachment, having lost 20 people killed, 10 wounded and

7 captured, was scattered. The Soviet units lost 5 people killed and 3 wounded. At 10 pm on September 26, the 3rd Cavalry Corps arrived in Grodno. The motorcycle detachments created in the 7th (150 horsemen and a tank regiment under the command of Colonel Kudurov) and the 36th (200 horsemen, tank and sapper platoons under the command of Major Chalenko) cavalry divisions marched on Suwalki and Augustov, respectively. By September 30, formations of the 3rd Cavalry Corps concentrated in the Suwalki ledge and organized the protection of the borders with Germany and Lithuania. Meanwhile, the 6th Tank Brigade, transferred to the 11th Army, approached Grodno, which occupied Knyshin on September 26th. By September

26-28, the troops of the 3rd and 11th armies entrenched themselves on the border with Lithuania and East Prussia from Druskeninkayado Shchuchin<sup>834</sup>.



Meanwhile, on September 21, at negotiations in Volko-vysk, representatives of the German command and the 6th Cavalry Corps agreed on a procedure for the withdrawal of the Wehrmacht from Bialystok. At this time, the corps formations were located on the Bolshaya Berestovitsa, Svis-loch line. On the morning of September 22, an advance detachment of 250 people was sent to Bialystok under the command of Colonel I.A. Pliyev, who reached the city at 13:00. By 4 p.m., the procedure for taking Bialystok from the

Germans was completed, and the German units left the city. Already the arrival of Pliev's detachment caused a revival among the local residents, a spontaneous rally arose. "It is interesting to note that these stormy scenes took place in full view of the retreating German troops. They were no longer afraid, no one noticed them now. Silently they walked along the strange streets of a hostile city, silently, but seeing on which side the mind and heart of the people are ... "Toward evening, the 6th Cavalry Division entered the city, warmly welcomed by local residents, and

The 11th Cavalry Division reached the area of Kryнки-Bialostotsky, Gorodok. Since September 26 by order Belorussian Front No. 06 / op, the 6th Cavalry Corps was subordinate to the 4th Army.

To the north, the 20th motorized brigade operated, transferred to the 10th Army, which on September 25 at 15 o'clock took Osoverts from the Germans, on September 26, moving along the bank of the river. Biebrzha, entered the Falcons, and by the evening of September 29 reached Zambruv. In the second echelon, the troops of the 6th Kav Corps were followed by divisions of the 5th Rifle Corps, transferred to the 10th Army on September 20. At dawn on September 24, the formations of the corps moved to the Svisloch-Porozovo line, and the forward detachments occupied Belsk-Podlyaski and Bransk at 13

hours on September 25. The next day, near St. Gainovich, 120 Polish soldiers were taken prisoner and a Polish warehouse was discovered, which contained 30 thousand shells, 10 million rounds of ammunition and 2 guns. On the same day, in the Chizhev area, the German rearguard detachment was fired upon by the Poles and, having lost 1 man killed and 4 wounded, returned to Tsekhanovets, to the location of the Soviet units that provided medical assistance to the Germans.

On September 27, the advanced detachments of the 5th Rifle Corps occupied Nur and Chizhev, and in the Gainuvka area, parts of the corps again stumbled upon a Polish warehouse, where about 14 thousand shells, 5 million rounds of ammunition, 1 tankette, 2 armored vehicles, 2 vehicles and 2 fuel barrels. On the same day, in the area

northeast of Kostelnaya in the forest, Soviet soldiers accidentally discovered abandoned military equipment. Having posted guards, the units began searching for buried weapons. At night, a Polish detachment of 50 horsemen approached the security chain, but retreated towards Nur, where it attacked the retreating German units. Having suffered losses, the Germans turned to the Soviet units for support and, under the cover of the reconnaissance battalion of the 13th Infantry Division, retreated to the west. In the area of the village of Moderka, this Polish detachment collided with a Soviet reconnaissance battalion and, having suffered losses, was dispersed. Meanwhile, 936 shells, 168,520 rifle cartridges, 2 motorcycles, 2 armored vehicles, 1 tankette, 4 trailers, 2 cars and other property were dug out in the forest. Similar finds were made by formations of the 5th Rifle Corps in the following days. At 19:00 on September 29, the corps formations occupied Malkina-Gurna and Kosuv-Latsky. At that moment, the troops of the 10th Army were on the Shchuchin-Kol-no-Lomzha-Malkina-Gurna-Kosuv line .

On the southern sector of the front, the troops of the 4th Army moved to the west. At 3 p.m. on September 22, the 29th Tank Brigade entered Brest, which was occupied by the troops of the 19th Motorized Corps of the Wehrmacht. As Krivoshein later recalled, in negotiations with General G. Guderian, he proposed the following parade procedure: "At 16 o'clock, parts of your corps in a marching column, with standards in front, leave the city, my units, also in a marching column, enter the city, stop at streets where the German regiments pass, and salute the passing units with their banners. Bands perform military marches. In the end, Guderian, who insisted on holding a full-fledged parade with preliminary formation, agreed to the proposed option, "having stipulated, however, that he would stand with me on the podium and greet the passing units." "At 16.00 General Guderian and I went up to the low podium. Motorized artillery followed the infantry, then tanks. On a low-flying flight, two dozen planes flew over the podium. Guderian, pointing at them, tried to shout over the noise of the engines: "German aces! Colossus!" he shouted. yes!" answered Guderian without much joy. Then the infantry again went on vehicles. Some of them, it seemed to me, I had already seen. Obviously, Guderian, using the vicious circle of nearby quarters, ordered the motorized regiments to demonstrate their power several times ...

Incidentally, contrary to popular myths,<sup>837</sup> this was the only Soviet-German parade. Refuting this statement, A.V. Korolenkov refers to some photographic materials of the parade in Grodno and the testimony of V.M. Berezhkov the following captions<sup>839</sup>. Indeed, in the book of A.A. Arutyunov are given under two photographs: 1. **"Grodno. September 1939 General Guderian and commander Chuikov take the joint victory parade of the German and Soviet troops"** and 2. **"Grodno. September 1939 Commander of the 4th Army V. I. Chuikov at the festive table together with Nazi generals and officers"**. However, the first of these photographs shows a podium on which Guderian and Crivoshein are standing. That is, the caption under the photo does not match what is shown on it. By the way, this book contains several more photographs of the same Brest parade, taken from different angles. The second photo really shows a "person who looks like"

Chuikov, however, there is no documentary evidence that Chuikov, as well as Guderian, was in Grodno these days. Thus, we are dealing with a rather crude falsification, which cannot serve as an argument at all in this matter. Just as unconvincing is a single phrase in Berezhkov's memoirs, which appeared at the height of the anti-Stalinist campaign of 1989. The fact is that there were no German troops in either Pinsk or Grodno in September 1939 and there was simply no one to hold parades there. Therefore, I repeat, only the parade in Brest is reliably known, which, however, was not a "victory parade", but only part of the procedure for transferring the city to the Red Army by the Wehrmacht. On September 23, near Vidomla, occupied by German units,

the following events took place. At 16 pm, the cavalry patrol of the reconnaissance battalion of the 8th Infantry Division was fired upon by machine-gun fire from 6 German tanks. "As a result of the shelling, 2 people were killed and 2 people were wounded and 3 horses were killed ... In response, fire was opened from the armored vehicles of the reconnaissance battalion on German tanks, one German tank was destroyed by return fire and the crew was destroyed, after which the German troops fired a red flare, indicating that units of the German army are in front of us. When clarifying the reasons for the shelling, the German command gave an explanation: "There was a mistake, the Poles thought, we sincerely regret what happened." At 23:00 the Germans left Vidomla. On September 24, army troops cleared the occupied territory from small groups of Polish troops. The 143rd Infantry Division and the 32nd Tank Brigade occupied Malorita, where they captured up to 6,000 Polish troops. Formations of the 23rd Rifle Corps reached the area of Anto-pol, Gorodets, and the 8th Rifle Division crossed the river. Western Bug of Brest. From September 25, the 8th and 143rd divisions were subordinated to the control of the 23rd rifle corps, and the 52nd rifle division fought with the 78th Polish infantry regiment in the Drogichin area. The next day, the 6th Cavalry Corps was subordinated to the 4th Army. By

18 o'clock on September 26, formations of the 6th Cavalry Corps entered Vysokie Mazowieck, which turned out to be almost completely burned by the Germans. According to local residents, a German soldier was killed during the passage of Wehrmacht units through the city. The Germans offered to give them the culprit, but he was never found. Then the Germans from cannons with incendiary direct fire shells hit the city. A fire broke out, the Germans did not allow the local population to put out and shot those who tried to do it. As a result, only 10 houses and a church survived in the city, and out of 5 thousand inhabitants, only 1 thousand remained. By the evening of September 27, the cavalry divisions reached the banks of the river. The Western Bug near Nur, Tsekhanovets, and at 19.30 on September 28 they reached the Sokolow Podlaski area. In the meantime, by the evening of September 26, the 8th Rifle Division occupied Byala Podlaska and Janow Podlaski, the 143rd Division crossed the Bug near Koden, and the 52nd Division entered Malorita, where from the next day it became subordinate to the 15th Rifle Corps 5th Army of the Ukrainian Front.

At 24 hours on September 27, the commander of the 23rd Rifle Corps issued order No. 011 / op, according to which it was required to send representatives with a detachment by 12 hours on September 28 to receive the cities of Siedlce and Lukow. "The exiled representatives must demand in a correct form from the representatives of the German army to liberate the cities of Sedlec, Lukov on September 29 and warn that the Red Army will take these points on September 29, even if they are not completely liberated by parts of the German army. Avoid conflicts with the German army, but demand the withdrawal of German troops persistently and with full dignity, as befits representatives of the Great Invincible

Workers 'and Peasants' Red Army. At 08:00 on September 29, advance detachments of troops of the 23rd Rifle Corps occupied the line Sokolow Podlaski-Siedlce-Lukow, where they were stopped at 18:00. A reconnaissance, tank and one rifle battalion entered Siedlce, and one rifle battalion and an artillery battalion of the 8th rifle division entered Lukow. On the left flank of the corps, on September 29-30, north and northeast of Parchev, the 143rd Rifle Division fought with units of the Polesie task force, retreating from Vlodava to

west. At 16.30, near Bo-Janow, 3 km northwest of Vogyn, 3 German armored vehicles approached and opened fire on the engineer battalion of the 143rd Infantry Division. After a short skirmish, the fire was stopped. "Having thrown out the flag, the officer, approaching the line of defense, apologized to the command of the 143rd SD. The officer motivated his advancement to the east by the fact that the border of the USSR with Germany runs along the river. Bug, and therefore have an order to advance to the east. On September 30, aerial reconnaissance reported that small enemy groups were moving north from Vlodava, and the main forces of the 6th Infantry Division were advanced against them on the Pishchats-Koden line. The next day, the division advanced south to the Domachevo-Vishnice line, where it was stopped. By September 29, the

troops of the Belorussian Front advance to the line Shchuchin-Staviski-Lomza-Zambruw-Tsekanovets-Kosuv-Latski-Sokoluv-Podlaski-Siedlce-Lukow-Vohyn. On October 1, the commander of the 4th Army, Divisional Commander Chuikov, issued an order, which demanded "... with the forward

**detachments, to have one commander of the headquarters and political department for negotiating with the German troops. When conducting negotiations, demand from the German troops: until 5.10, the Sokolov, Sedlec, Lukov, Vogyn line should not be crossed. The reason for our delay at this turn to explain:**

**1. A lot of our troops moved to the western bank of the river.**

**Bug. 2. Bridges across the river. The Bug is very bad, broken by German aircraft and destroyed by the Poles, which delays the withdrawal of units. Report all negotiations urgently to the headquarters. Do not leave the line of Sokolov, Sedlec, Lukov, Vogyn without the permission of the Military Council. In the event of a German threat, bring units into battle formation and report to me. Commander of the 29th brigade to reconnoiter the routes from Brest to the line of forward detachments and be in full combat readiness to support rifle and cavalry units .**

On the Ukrainian front, the troops of the 5th Army on September 23 resumed their advance to the west. Formations of the 15th Rifle Corps were advancing on the northern flank. At 00.30 on September 24, the reconnaissance battalion of the 45th Infantry Division entered Lyuboml. From surveys of the population, it turned out that on September 20, German troops entered the city, disarming the Polish garrison. Some of the weapons were taken away by the Germans, and some were distributed to the population for the organization of the police. On September 21, the Germans left the city, and the next day a group of Polish troops raided the city, dispersed and disarmed the police, killing 7 policemen, and at 11 o'clock on September 23, on the Lyuboml-Yagodin stage, fired at the train and took the locomotive. There was no fuel in the city, and food was taken out by German troops. At 14.30 on September 25, the 36th tank brigade, having crossed the river. The Western Bug, reached the Hill (Helm) and, having concentrated forces, attacked the city. After a series of clashes with the Polish garrison, part of which went towards Krasnostav, at 14:00 on September 26, the city was occupied. About 8 thousand Polish soldiers were taken prisoner, and 7 thousand rifles, 1,250 revolvers, 40 machine guns, 10 guns, 14 vehicles and 1.5 thousand horses became trophies of the Soviet troops.

On September 26-27, the 36th Tank Brigade remained in Kholm, waiting for the rifle units of the 15th Corps to be brought up, which on September 25-26 crossed the Western Bug. On September 28, the 36th tank brigade set out in the direction of Lublin, but, having reached Pia-ki at 12 o'clock, found out that the city was occupied by German troops. At 10 o'clock on September 29, the Soviet delegates arrived in Lublin to negotiate the withdrawal of German troops, who were supposed to leave the city by evening. However, it turned out that the German command was not going to withdraw troops, waiting for orders from Berlin. By September 29, formations of the 15th Rifle Corps reached the Vlodava-Pugachev-Piaski front, where they were stopped. On September 30, at 12.30, an aircraft with German markings flew over

the location of the 44th Infantry Division, which, 42 km southeast of Lublin, fired at the location of the 1st Battalion of the 146th Infantry Regiment and the 179th Howitzer Artillery Regiment. As a result, 8 Soviet servicemen were wounded.

To the south, units of the 8th Rifle Corps advanced, which broke the poorly organized resistance of the enemy on the Western Bug and on September 24, after a two-hour battle, occupied Hrubieszow. Further advance was quite calm - only small groups of Polish troops came across. On September 25, Zamosc was occupied, and after a day's work, the corps formations on September 26 moved to Bilgoraj and

Krasnostav. The 44th Infantry Division made contact with the German 8th Infantry Division and concluded an agreement with it on the occupation of Krasnobrod and the movement towards Rudki. The renewed rains washed out the roads, which caused new difficulties in transporting supplies. After the day, the troops on September 28 continued to move towards Krasnik. On the same day, the 38th Tank Brigade, which had arrived in Zamoż, and the 14th Cavalry Division, which had reached Komarov, were transferred to the 8th Rifle Corps. K 14

September 29, the troops of the 8th Corps reached the Olshanka-Kshchonov-Tarnovka-Zakrzhev front, where they were stopped by order of the commander of the 5th Army No. 022844 20-kilometer strip

separating the Wehrmacht and the Red Army. On September 21-23, units of the 7th and 8th Army Corps of the 14th German Army encountered a group of General Domb-Bernatsky. In the ensuing battles, the German units again pushed the Poles to the east, and on September 23 they even turned to the command of the 6th Soviet Army with a proposal to help them defeat the Poles. However, the Soviet command was in no hurry to get involved in other people's battles. Moreover, when the troops of the 6th Army resumed their advance to the west on September 25, and the formations of the 2nd Cavalry Corps, together with the 24th Tank Brigade, entered Zholkev, and by September 26 they advanced to the area

Rava-Russka, Nemirov, Magerov, they never met any large Polish group. On September 27, the corps continued to move in the direction of Lyubachev, Rudka and did not meet with the enemy. The next day, the 14th Cavalry Division was sent to Tomaszow, Zamosc and transferred to the 5th Army. The rest of the troops of the 2nd Cavalry Corps went to the area of Bukovina, Dobcha, Dzi-kuv and put up patrols on the river. San. The 24th Tank Brigade reached Cieszanow on 28 September. In the meantime, on September 25, the 38th

Tank Brigade was sent through Zholkev to Sokal, where it arrived at 14:00 on September 26 and was transferred to the 5th Army. The troops of the 17th Rifle Corps on September 25 also marched to the demarcation line and reached the Yanov, Dobrostan region. On September 27, they entered Yavorov, and on September 28 - in Lyubachev. By the evening of the next day, the divisions of the 17th Rifle Corps reached the area of Bukovina, Dobcha, Tarnograd and replaced units of the 2nd Cavalry Corps guarding the river. San. The 99th Rifle Division of the 17th Rifle Corps entered Przemysl at 09:00 on September 29 and began receiving it from the German command. By September 29, the troops of the 6th Army reached the middle course of the river. San from Bilgoraj to Przemysl<sup>845</sup>.

In the zone of the 12th Army, the consolidated groups of the 13th Rifle Corps at 16.30 on September 22 entered Stry, which had just been abandoned by the German troops, and on September 24 they entered Drohobych. On September 23, the 23rd tank brigade at 2000 reached Borislav, which was occupied by German troops. On September 24, Soviet troops began to advance westward, taking Drohobych and Borislav from the Germans. The 25th Panzer Corps was withdrawn from

Komarno the day before to the reserve of the Ukrainian Front and did not advance further. The 4th cavalry corps, passing through Drohobych, on September 26 reached the area of Sutkowice, Viskovice, Lanovice, Verezhnitsa, where at 21 o'clock, on the basis of intelligence, received an order to prepare for battles with the Polish cavalry group under the command of General V. Anders, located in the forests north of Reiterovice. By decision of the corps commander, the 32nd Cavalry Division continued to move towards Dobromil, Khyruv, while the 34th Cavalry Division, the 26th Tank Brigade and the 18th Tank Regiment of the 32nd Cavalry Division remained in place, waiting for the Poles to approach. At 6.30 on September 27, the 26th and 27th Lancers of the Anders group attacked the 148th Cavalry Regiment in Sutkovitsa, however, met with artillery fire and a counterattack, they again retreated to the edge of the forest. During the three-hour battle, the enemy lost 300 people killed, 200 prisoners, 4 guns and 7 machine guns. The next day, the group was dispersed, but General Anders disappeared with several officers. Meanwhile, the 32nd Cavalry Division; in the middle of the day on September 28, she entered Khyruv and Konyuv, where, after a short battle, she captured the remnants of the 25th Lancers. On the evening of September 28, the troops of the 4th Cavalry Corps

began to guard the border from Przemysl to Mshanets. On September 24-25, the 5th Cavalry Corps, which was operating to the south, began combing the foothills of the Carpathians along with the advance to the west. At 5 p.m. on September 26, the 16th Cavalry Division occupied Turku, and the 9th Cavalry Regiment of the division arrived at the Beskyd station, which, as it turned out, was occupied by Hungarian troops on September 23rd. An attempt to contact the Hungarians caused them to fire from hand weapons. The return artillery fire of Soviet armored vehicles led to the cessation of firing and the withdrawal of Hungarian soldiers into the railway tunnel on the border. According to local residents, the tunnel was mined; the situation on this section of the border with Hungary was normalized after negotiations<sup>846</sup>. On September 28, the 5th Cavalry Corps reached the upper reaches of the river. San and on the border with Hungary. On the same day, in the Svidnik area, the commandant of the Brest Fortress, General of the Brigade K. Plisovsky, was captured

Thus, by the end of September 29, the troops of the Ukrainian Front were on the line Pugaczów-Piaski-Piotrków-Krzemien-Bil Goraj-Przemysl-upper river. San. It was necessary to comb the occupied territory and eliminate individual detachments and groups of Polish troops, who mainly sought to break through to Hungary or Romania. The most serious problems arose with the Soviet troops operating in Polesie. The fact is that there was a Polish task force "Polesie" (about 18 thousand people), formed from border units, gendarmerie, small garrisons and sailors

Pinsk flotilla under the command of General Kleeberg, which retreated to the west<sup>848</sup>. Meanwhile, the 52nd Infantry Division, transferred from the Belorussian Front to the Ukrainian Front, on September 27 advanced north of Pripjat from Kobrin to Vlodava, reaching the Malorita region by evening. At 16:00, the 411th tank battalion and the 54th anti-tank division occupied Shatsk, capturing 429 Polish soldiers. Meanwhile, the 28th separate engineer battalion was advancing towards Vlodava, on the approaches to which it was fired upon and, having lost several wounded, began to retreat. On the morning of September 28, a citizen appeared in Shatsk, saying that in

the forest southeast of the city, a squadron of Poles wanted to surrender. Without verifying this information, the 411th tank battalion moved in a column and in the defile of lakes Lutsemer and Krugloye was fired upon by enemy artillery, losing 7 people. At this moment, the divisional headquarters moved in columns, which, of course, gave rise to communication problems. The attacked Soviet units, having no connection with the command of the division, began to retreat. On the night of September 29, the Poles occupied Shatsk again. On September 28, the 58th Infantry Regiment and the reconnaissance battalion of the 52nd Infantry Division on the isthmus between the river. The Western Bug by Lake Pulemetskoye entered into battle with an enemy group that had at its disposal a large number of heavy and light machine guns and hand grenades. Having learned about the wound of the divisional commander, the soldiers called up for mobilization began to scatter through the forest, and only a small detachment of up to 100 regular soldiers, supported by artillery, was able to stop the enemy, forcing him to retreat.

As a result of the night battle, enemy units near Melniki with a force of up to one and a half battalions were surrounded by the 112th Infantry Regiment and surrendered by 8 o'clock on September 29. At the same time, the 411th tank battalion, which was fighting for the capture of Shatsk and trying to reach the rear of the enemy through the defile of the Chernoye and Lyutsemer lakes, was shot by anti-tank guns. The fighting, which continued until the next day, showed that the personnel of the 52nd Infantry Division, accustomed to a relatively calm advance through the territory of Western Belarus, was not ready for fierce enemy resistance. Operating in a wooded and swampy area, the units of the division often had no communication with each other and were practically not controlled in any way. Only by 9 am on September 29 did the division command manage to restore order in the units. All this led to the prolongation of the fighting and prohibitively high losses: 81 people were killed (including the commander of the 411th tank battalion, Captain Nasenyuk) and 184 were wounded (including the division commander, Colonel I. Russiyanov), 5 T-26 tanks were knocked out, 2 T-38s, 2 tractors and 3 anti-tank guns. 1,100 Polish servicemen were taken prisoner, the enemy left 524 corpses on the battlefield, 500 rifles, 34 machine guns, 60 thousand rounds of ammunition, 4 wagons of shells and 23 boxes of explosives became trophies of the Soviet troops. The remnants of the Polish group at about 16.30 on September 30 crossed the river. Western Bug 849. In an effort

to help the 52nd Rifle Division, the commander of the 15th

Rifle Corps sent the 253rd Rifle Regiment and a mobile detachment

of the 45th Rifle Division in the direction of Vlodava. At 10 pm on September 30, the detachment set out from the Zavadov region along the highway to Vlodava. "At 4.50 on October 1, a tank company of the reconnaissance battalion, moving as part of a mobile detachment ahead of the 253rd rifle regiment, reached the southern outskirts of Vytychno, where it was met by fire from two anti-tank guns, as a result of which 2 T-37 tanks were disabled (one tank burned down, the cap was shot down on another tank; 1 person remained from the crews of the tanks). The cavalry squadron of the reconnaissance battalion, sent for reconnaissance at 5.30, which received the task of establishing the composition of the enemy occupying Vytychno, reached the western and

eastern outskirts of Vytychno, where it was met with heavy fire from up to 7 heavy machine guns of the enemy, who organized defense on the northeastern shore of Lake Vytytsk, the southern outskirts of Vytychno, southern edge of the grove east of Vytychno. Heavy and light machine guns were installed and camouflaged on haystacks, trees, windows of houses, as well as on specially prepared boats on Lake Vytytsk. 18 anti-tank guns were installed on the southern outskirts of Vytychno, and the entire narrow isthmus between Lake. Vytycke and Vytychno were under heavy fire. The specified area was defended by the enemy, with a force of up to 2,000 people, consisting of various units of border guards, gendarmes and officers, who offered stubborn resistance and turned into counterattacks. The commander of the 253rd Rifle Regiment, after clarifying the situation, made the following decision: a) with the 1st Rifle Battalion, advance on the eastern outskirts of Vytychno, later on Old Maidan; b) the 2nd rifle battalion advance along the highway between the lake. Vytycke and Vytychno and by mastery

to advance on Metelka with the isthmus;

c) a tank battalion to attack the enemy along the highway, facilitating the advance of the 1st and 2nd rifle battalions; d) attack the

cavalry squadron of the reconnaissance battalion on foot in the direction of Vytychno in the interval between the 1st and 2nd rifle battalions;

e) by the division of the 45th artillery regiment from the Gospodsky Dvor Chernikov area to suppress firing points the enemy in the Vytychno area and support the attack of the units.

At 7.00, performing the assigned task, the units went on the attack. The cavalry squadron of the reconnaissance battalion and the 1st rifle battalion, advancing on Vytychno, captured Vytychno at 9.00 and captured about 400 people ... The 2nd rifle battalion, advancing along the eastern shore of the lake. Vytycke in the direction of Metelka, was met by heavy artillery fire. The fire was fired from boats floating on the lake. The battalion, having gone out into the open, suffered heavy losses ... and had no success. The regiment commander took the 2nd rifle battalion to the southwestern outskirts of Vytychno to put it in order, after which he was given the task of advancing along the western shore of Lake. Vytytske to Vulka Vytytska, with the task of preventing the enemy from retreating to the west. The 1st rifle battalion, carrying

out the task, at 13.00 captured the Old Maidan and continued to advance through the forest to Metelka. Upon reaching the 1st rifle battalion of the eastern edge of the grove (to the west of Old Maidan), the enemy, with a force of up to a company, went over to the counterattack; a bayonet fight took place, as a result of which 170 enemy men were killed. At 14.45, after the destruction of the

counterattacking enemy, in front of the front of the 253rd Infantry Regiment, there was a withdrawal of the enemy in a northwestern direction. Units of the 253rd Infantry Regiment went into pursuit. At 1700, the 41st reconnaissance air squadron stormed the retreating enemy columns along the Pesya Volya-Sosnovitsa road. Filed by local residents, the departing columns and convoys of the enemy, under the influence of aviation, fled in panic, waved large scarves, threw ammunition and weapons into the lake. Protein...

The 16th Rifle Regiment of the 87th Rifle Division, which was in the reserve of the commander in the city of Kholm, received the task of moving in the direction of Vlodava and at 21.30 on September 30 passed the starting point - a crossroads on the northwestern outskirts of Kholm. At 14.30 on October 1, upon reaching the crossroads east of Lyuta, through the representative of shtakor-15 who arrived by plane, the regiment received the task of moving westward to Lyuta, Zdzharka, Kozak, Kolache and further to Pesya Volya, with the task together with the 253rd rifle regiment destroy the enemy grouping in the area of the lake. Vytytska, Pesya Volya. In carrying out the assigned task, the regiment in

18.00 reached the area of Sukhava, Kolache, Kozaki, where he captured 500 prisoners, including 150 officers. The 16th Infantry Regiment established contact with the 253rd Regiment. The losses of the 253rd Infantry Regiment with attached units amounted to 31 people killed, 101 wounded, 1 T-37 tank was disabled. Enemy losses: 380 killed, about 1 thousand people captured. The trophies of the Soviet troops were 400 rifles, 8 machine guns, 4 guns 850 .

A little earlier, on September 29, in the zone of the Belorussian Front in the area of Rudnya, Radcha, Yablon, units of the 143rd Infantry Division came across a large detachment of Poles from the same Polesie group. On the night of September 29, the reconnaissance battalion of the division moved from Vyshnitsa to Yablon and Parchev. Not noticing the enemy, the battalion was fired at almost point-blank range by small-caliber artillery and machine guns. 3 tanks

and 3 trucks were immediately put out of action, the personnel lay down in roadside ditches. The battalion commander Captain Malyshev and Commissar Brezhnev managed to stop the panic that had begun. The reconnaissance

battalion went on the defensive and at about 2.30 informed the division headquarters about the incident. A rifle company and a platoon of an anti-tank battalion were sent to help him. In the meantime, the enemy retreated to the southwest, but another Polish detachment ran into the reconnaissance battalion from the east, with which a battle ensued. Then, from the 635th Infantry Regiment, the 1st Battalion and the 1st Battalion of the 287th Artillery Regiment were sent to help. In Rudna, units of the 635th regiment were fired upon by the enemy. Then the commander of the regiment, Major

Shvarev moved a detachment from the 3rd battalion there. While the rifle units were advancing on Yablon, the reconnaissance battalion withdrew to the north and left the

battlefield. At about 6 pm, the Soviet units attacked the enemy, who had settled in Yablony, but the Polish cavalry launched a counterattack, and the Red Army retreated to their original positions. Then, pulling up all available forces, Shvarev attacked Yablon again at 23:00. Strike detachments operated on the flanks, and armored tractors T-20 were used in the center instead of tanks. As a result of the battle on the night of September 30, Yablon was occupied, and they refused to pursue the retreating enemy, settling down for the night in a field near

villages. At 2 am on September 30, the 1st battalion of the 635th rifle regiment was attacked by enemy cavalry. Having repulsed the attack and concentrated forces, the 1st, 3rd battalions and the division of the 287th artillery regiment at 3 o'clock themselves went on the attack and after a stubborn battle at 10 o'clock again entered Yablun. After that, the enemy began to retreat towards Parchev, although separate clashes continued until the evening. At 12 o'clock the called aircraft bombed the

retreating Polish columns. In the meantime, at 7 o'clock in the area of Grabovo-Milyanov, the 487th regiment of the division also went on the offensive against Parchev from the north. At 16:00, Soviet aviation bombed the enemy, and at 16:30 the regiment went on the offensive with two battalions, occupying Milyanov. However, on the edge of the forest south of Kopin, the reconnaissance patrols of the 2nd battalion did not notice the enemy, who, having let the battalion come close, brought down powerful rifle and machine-gun fire on him. Since the regiment commander lost contact with the artillery division during the offensive, he was unable to support the 2nd battalion with fire, which led to its withdrawal to the north. "Therefore, the 3rd battalion also had to withdraw. On the night of October 1, the Polish units withdrew to the southwest, and the Soviet units received an order from the 4th Army to go on the defensive at the lines reached. Moreover, the corps command considered that the enemy would try to break through to Byala Podlaska, and ordered the 143rd Infantry Division to go on the defensive at the reached line, and the 151st Infantry Regiment of the 8th Infantry Division to take up defensive positions on the southern approaches to Byala -Under-weasel. Soviet losses in these battles amounted to 36 people killed, 41 wounded and 9 were captured, 3 tanks, 3 vehicles, 4 machine guns and 1 gun. 189 Polish servicemen were taken prisoner, 20 enemy corpses were counted on the battlefield, and 14 rifles, 4 horses and 1

field kitchen became Soviet trophies. At the same time, south of the 140th Rifle Division of the 36th Rifle Corps, which became part of the 5th Army of the Ukrainian Front, on September 30, in the area southeast of Yanuv, they were negotiating with a group of Polish troops about the surrender of the Red Army. At 22:00, when crossing from Krzhe-menya, the 1st battalion of the 445th rifle regiment was fired upon by rifle and machine-gun fire. Turning around, the battalion entered the battle, which lasted until 1 am on October 1. During this time, three enemy attacks were repulsed, but the approach of the 3rd battalion of the 637th rifle regiment and the tank battalion decided the outcome of the battle in favor of the Soviet troops, who lost 3 people killed and 5 wounded. From October 1 to October 5, the 140th Rifle and 14th Cavalry Divisions in the forests near Bilgorai disarmed a cavalry group of Polish troops under the command of Colonel T. Zelenevsky. In total, 12,408 people were taken prisoner, 12,229 rifles, 728 machine guns, 64 guns, 5,662 thousand rounds of ammunition and large stocks of military<sup>852</sup> equipment became trophies.

By the beginning of October 1939, the composition of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts increased significantly due to the concentration of additional forces from the internal districts (see table 32). Taking into account the troops of the 4th Rifle Corps (10th, 84th, 126th Rifle and 24th Cavalry Divisions), which was subordinate to the 7th Army from September 30 to October 6, and then returned to the Belorussian Front, and the troops of the 13th Army (35th Rifle Corps consisting of the 15th, 51st and 95th Rifle Divisions) of the Ukrainian Front, deployed on the border with Romania, the fronts united 56 rifle, 13 cavalry divisions, 18 tank and 2 motorized brigades with a total strength of 2,421,300 men, 5,467 medium and heavy guns, 6,096 tanks and 3,727 aircraft<sup>853</sup>. Of these, the 3rd Army had 131,252 men, 884 guns, 975 tanks, 178 armored vehicles and 6,612 motor vehicles. In the 11th Army - 93,634 people, 881 guns, 368 tanks, 24 armored vehicles and 4,823 vehicles<sup>855</sup>. In the 4th Army - 146,461 people, 1,374 guns, 771 tanks and armored vehicles, 5,789 vehicles. **Moscow-Berlin: II** In the meantime, on September 23, Ribbentrop

informed Moscow of his

readiness to come to the talks and asked for a convenient time for this. The Soviet government proposed on September 27-28, and, taking into account the mood of the ruling circles of England and France regarding the "Curzon Line", already on the evening of September **25**, Stalin and Molotov handed over to Schulenburg a proposal to discuss the transfer to the Soviet sphere of interests at future negotiations. 10th SC 5th, 50th, 115th SD 3rd SC 139th, 150th SD 3rd QC 7th,

36th CD

15th TC 2nd, 27- I brigade, 20th brigade 25th brigade

16th SC 2nd, 27th, 100th,

164th SD

3rd

Belarusian 11th

22nd  
brigade 5th brigade 4th, 13th, 121st  
10th brigade 11th brigade 29th, 64th, 145th  
brigade 4th cd, 6th, 21st brigade  
23rd SC 55th, 143rd SD  
4th 24th SC 6th, 8th, 33rd, 122nd SD  
6th KK 6th, 11th KD  
29th, 32- I  
brigade  
113th SD 15th SC 45th, 52nd,  
5th 87th SD 8th SC 44th, 81st SD  
60th SD, 36th, 38th  
brigade 6th SC 7th, 41st, 140th  
6th SD 17th SC 96th, 97th, 99th  
SD 2nd KK 3 -I, 5th, 14th KD, 24th  
brigade  
26th brigade 49th SC  
Ukrainian 12th 7th 23rd, 62nd SD 4th KK  
SC 32nd, 34th KD 80th  
SD, 23 -th brigade of the 14th SC Army 5th KK 9th,  
16th KD cavalry group of the 25th TC 4th,  
5th brigade, 1st mbr 13th SC  
58th, 72nd, 146th SD 27th SC  
25th, 131st, 141st SD 36th SC  
135th, 169th, 176th SD 37th SC  
124th, 130th, 187- I SD 30th SD, 10th, 14th, 49th brigade

Lithuania, and in return they were ready to give up part of the Warsaw and Lublin provinces to the Bug. Stalin said that if the Germans agree to this, then "the USSR will immediately take up the solution of the problem of the Baltic states, in accordance with the protocol of August 23, and expects in this matter the full support of the May 858 government . " At 6 pm on September 27,

Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow.  
First conversation with Stalin and Molotov  
took place

from 22.00 to 1.00 in the presence of Schulenburg and Shkvartsev. During the negotiations on the issue of the final drawing of the border on the territory of Poland, Ribbentrop, referring to the fact that Poland was "completely defeated by the German armed forces" and Germany "is lacking, first of all, timber and oil", expressed the hope that "the Soviet government will make concessions in oil fields in the south in the upper reaches of the San River. The German government would have expected the same at Augustow and Bialystok, since there are vast forests there, which are very important for our economy. A clear solution of these questions would be very useful for the further development of German-Soviet relations. In addition, Ribbentrop confirmed that Germany, as before, was ready to "carry out a precise demarcation" of the territory of Poland. For his part, Stalin, citing the danger of the division of the Polish population, which could give rise to unrest and pose a threat to both states, proposed leaving the territory of ethnographic Poland in the hands of Germany. Concerning German wishes

about a change in the line of state interests in the south, Stalin declared that in this respect any reciprocal steps on the part of the Soviet government were excluded. This territory has already been promised to the Ukrainians... "My hand," said Stalin, "will never move to demand such a sacrifice from the Ukrainians." However, as compensation, Germany was offered supplies of up to 500,000 tons of oil in exchange for supplies of coal and steel pipes. Regarding concessions in the north, Stalin stated that "the Soviet government is ready to transfer to Germany the salient between East Prussia and Lithuania with the city of Suwalki



to the line immediately north of Augustow, but no more. Thus, Germany will receive the northern part of the August forests. As a result, the territorial issue was reduced to two options. According to the first, everything remained as it was decided on August 23rd. According to the second, Germany ceded Lithuania and received for this 859 areas east of the Vistula to the Bug and Suwalki .

without Augustow. Reporting to Berlin on the results of the negotiations, Ribbentrop, after evaluating the options for resolving the territorial issue, noted that he could not determine which of them was more beneficial to Germany. For the first option speaks, in his opinion, that "having in the hands of Lithuania, we will expand the German colonization zone in the northeast." Against this is the fact that the division of the Polish population may create the possibility of friction between Germany and the USSR. The second option is supported by the fact that the accession of the entire Polish population excludes political intrigues for the violation of German-Soviet relations and makes it possible to solve the national-political problem at the discretion of Germany. Against this, it can be objected that in this way the USSR is freed from the international Polish problem. Ribbentrop asked Hitler to inform him of the preferred option before 1200 German time on September 28, otherwise he would be forced to decide for himself .

The next day, from 15:00 to 18:30, a second conversation took place in the Kremlin, during which it turned out that Hitler generally approved the second option for resolving the territorial issue. After that, discussions began on the line of the border. Stalin "agreed to the appropriate transfer of the border to the south" in the Augustow Forest. The Soviet side abandoned the territory between the Narewa and Bug rivers east of the Ostrov-Ostrolenka line, while the German side slightly moved the border to the north in the area of Rawa Ruska and Lyubachev. A long discussion around Przemyśl did not lead to any results, and the city remained divided into two parts along the river. San. During the last round of negotiations from 1.00 to

5.00 September 29 was prepared and signed an agreement on friendship and the border between the USSR and Germany. According to this agreement, the border was established "between mutual state interests on the territory of the former Polish state" (Article 1). This border was recognized as final, and the intervention of third powers in this decision was rejected (Article 2); the parties were to engage in the state reconstruction of the annexed territories (Art. 3) and considered this reorganization as "a reliable foundation for the further development of friendly relations between their peoples" (Art. 4) 86'.

In addition to the agreement, a confidential protocol was signed on the resettlement of Germans living in the sphere of Soviet interests to Germany, and Ukrainians and Belarusians living in the sphere of German interests to the USSR, and two secret additional protocols. In one of them, the parties assumed obligations not to allow "any Polish agitation" and to cooperate in the suppression of it. In accordance with another protocol, Lithuania was transferred to the sphere of interests of the USSR in exchange for Lublin and part of the Warsaw Voivodeship, which were transferred to Germany. After the adoption by the Soviet government of measures to ensure its interests in Lithuania, part of the Lithuanian territory in the south-west of the country was to go to Germany . Later, on October 4, a protocol was signed in Moscow describing the border from the river. Igarka to the Uzhoksky pass 863 , the content of which was brought to the attention of the troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts on October 5 by telegram of the Chief of the General Staff No. 090864 . The Soviet Union received a territory of 196 thousand square meters. km (50.4% of the territory of Poland) with a population of about 13 million people.

On September 28, both governments made a joint statement: "After the German Government and the Government of the USSR, by the treaty signed today, finally settled the issues that arose as a result of the collapse of the Polish state, and thereby created a solid foundation for lasting peace in Eastern Europe, they mutually agree to express the opinion that the elimination of a real war between Germany, on the one hand, and England and France, on the other, would be in the interests of all peoples. Therefore, both Governments will direct their common efforts, in case of need in agreement with other friendly powers, in order to achieve this goal as soon as possible. If, however, these efforts of both Governments remain unsuccessful, then the fact will be established that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, and in the event of a continuation of the war, the Governments of Germany and the USSR will consult with each other on the necessary measures . With this statement, the German leadership sought to demonstrate Soviet-German "friendship", to put pressure on Britain and France and force them to stop the war, although it was clear that consultations did not oblige anyone to anything. In addition, Ribbentrop and Molotov exchanged letters on economic issues. At 12.40 on September 29, Ribbentrop flew to Berlin. **Western reaction**

The outbreak of war in Europe and the actions of the Red Army in Poland after September 17, 1939 did not improve Soviet-British and Soviet-French relations, which deteriorated after the signing of a non-aggression pact with Germany, which was perceived by the British and French leadership as a defeat of their foreign policy strategy. At the same time, not wanting to push the USSR towards further rapprochement with Germany, England and France did not exacerbate the problem of Soviet intervention in the German-Polish war, but tried to clarify the Soviet position regarding the war in Yovrop. Already on September 18, the French Prime Minister

E. Daladier asked the Soviet ambassador whether the USSR was temporarily taking the Ukrainian and Belarusian population under its armed protectorate, or whether Moscow intended to annex these territories to the USSR<sup>867</sup>. In England and France, it was widely believed that the introduction of Soviet troops into Poland had an anti-German orientation and this could lead to increased tension in Soviet-German relations.

In London, they feared that Moscow might enter the war on the side of Berlin, so the Soviet declaration of neutrality in the European war was received there with satisfaction. On September 18, at a meeting of the British government, it was decided that, according to the Anglo-Polish agreement, England was bound by the obligation to defend Poland only in the event of aggression from Germany. Therefore, it was decided "not to send any protest to Russia." And although the Anglo-French press allowed themselves rather harsh statements, the official position of England and France amounted to a tacit recognition of the Soviet action in Poland. Nevertheless, the Western allies tried to get a more detailed reply from Moscow about the intentions of the USSR. On September 20, France repeated its request. On September 23, 1939, London asked the Soviet government whether it was ready to respond to the British proposal for trade negotiations, or whether its agreement with Germany "makes such negotiations generally pointless." The British leadership was also interested in "how does the Soviet government think of the future of Poland? In particular, is the existing demarcation line a temporary military measure, or does it have a more permanent value?", as well as how much the principles of Soviet foreign policy have changed.

On September 27, the day when Ribbentrop again arrived in Moscow, the answer from Moscow was brought to the attention of the British leadership, according to which the USSR agreed to conduct trade negotiations with England. As for the fate of Poland, the Soviet leadership believed that "the current demarcation line does not, of course, represent the state border between Germany and the USSR. The fate of Poland depends on many factors and opposing forces, which it is currently not possible to take into account." Naturally, Moscow stressed that the principles of Soviet foreign policy had not changed, and Soviet-German relations "are determined by the non-aggression pact"<sup>871</sup>. Is it a coincidence that the Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship and Border of September 28, 1939, signed on the night of September 29, 1939, as V.Ya. Sipols<sup>872</sup> Germany and the USSR, , contrary to its name, did not define the border between and the border between their "mutual state interests on the territory of the former Polish state"? It is possible that neither Berlin nor Moscow wanted to sign an official document that would fix the division of Poland between them.

This made it possible to show England and France that the USSR did not claim national Polish territories, and that its actions were potentially anti-German. In general, England accepted the Soviet position, and on October 17 and 27 it was brought to the attention of the USSR that London wanted to see an ethnographic Poland of modest size and there could be no question of returning Western Ukraine and Western Belarus to it. In general, in the West, many believed that the USSR did not participate in the division of Poland, since the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus were not Polish territories, and the problem of restoring Poland was connected only with Germany. Accordingly, England and France advised the Polish government in exile not to declare war on the USSR. In London and Paris, two foreign policy courses have emerged in relation to Moscow. One of them considered the USSR as the main enemy of the Western allies, for which damage was good by all means, and the second proceeded from the need for the initial defeat of Germany, which required Moscow to be attracted to the anti-German front by any possible means. In any case, the Western Allies were interested in provoking tension in Soviet-German relations. In addition, Anglo-French propaganda actively used the thesis of the "red danger" for Europe<sup>875</sup>.

In addition to the propaganda pressure on the USSR, Britain and France, who relied on the economic strangulation of Germany by cutting off its foreign trade, began to refuse to fulfill Soviet orders, up to the confiscation of already finished products. According to London and Paris, this should have

make it difficult for Soviet economic assistance to Germany, and besides, as Molotov rightly noted in a speech at the 6th session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, "the Anglo-French ruling circles have frustrated their calculations about using our country in the war against Germany and, in view of this, they are pursuing a policy of revenge in against the Soviet Union"<sup>876</sup>. On September 6, England published a list of trade items that it would consider as contraband, and all September announced its intention to inspect the ships of neutral countries in order to search for contraband to Germany. It is clear that the delays and arrests of Soviet and USSR chartered ships did not contribute to the improvement of Anglo-Soviet relations. In response to trade discrimination, the USSR also reduced its supplies to England and France. However, England, interested in obtaining Soviet timber, on September 18 offered to exchange it for delayed Soviet orders. As a result, on October 11, a Soviet-British agreement was concluded on the exchange of Soviet timber for rubber and tin. During the outbreak of war at sea, the British Navy quickly<sup>877</sup>.

found out that part of the German ships had taken refuge in Murmansk. It is clear that British ships soon appeared in the Barents Sea, with the aim of intercepting German ships at the moment they entered neutral waters. Once the commander of one of the coastal batteries of the Soviet Northern Fleet opened fire on 2 British destroyers, which, in his opinion, were in Soviet territorial waters. Putting a smoke screen, the destroyers went out from under the fire of Soviet long-range guns into the open sea. However, there was no protest from England: apparently, the ships actually entered Soviet territorial waters or were literally on their edge. In addition, the Soviet naval command was afraid of the appearance of the Anglo-French squadron in the Black Sea. Therefore, the Black Sea Fleet conducted intense reconnaissance on the outskirts of Odessa and Sevastopol. In addition to aerial reconnaissance on the outskirts of these Soviet ports, the Romanian port of Constanta, the Bulgarian Varna and Burgas, near about. Snake and at the entrance to the Bosphorus on September 17, Soviet submarines were deployed in positions. In total, 10 submarines went out to sea, but the Black Sea sailors did not have any real enemy<sup>878</sup>.

#### **Toward the New Border: October**

**1-14** The new Soviet-German agreement was immediately brought to the attention of the troops operating in

Poland. At 08:00 on September 29, the headquarters of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts received order No. 625 to stop troops at the reached lines no later than 18.00<sup>879</sup>. Order No. 15/op dated September 30, 1939 to the troops of the Belorussian Front gave a rough description of the border established by the agreement of September 28, and indicated that around October 5 it was planned to begin the withdrawal of troops located "to the west of the established and indicated border line". The front commander ordered "now to begin the withdrawal of all convoys, transports and vehicles to the east of the border, without prejudice to the normal supply of troops." It was allowed "to withdraw from the areas located to the west of the border, military property, guns, machine guns, rifles, ammunition, as well as tanks, armored vehicles, vehicles and fuel. It is necessary to move all the rolling stock to the east from the border, for which purpose it is necessary to hastily load military, I emphasize, MILITARY equipment into the wagons and immediately send it to our territory. It was required to outline areas, lines and routes for the withdrawal of troops and "to organize trouble-free communication with the withdrawn units in order to

always know their position accurately"<sup>880</sup>. Similar orders were issued by the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front, on the basis of which, for example, the headquarters of the 15th Rifle Corps at 12 o'clock on October 1 issued order No. 02c indicating the new line of

the Soviet-German border. It was also ordered to **"immediately begin the evacuation of property within its borders. The removal of military property should be carried out discreetly, without noise, without creating the impression of a mass evacuation, and finish the work on 10/3/39. Take out only military property, v**

All prisoners of war were ordered to be immediately evacuated by rail with appropriate security and food to the Krivin camp<sup>881</sup>. As indicated in the order of the 5th Army No. 007 of September 30, it was necessary to evacuate the train, cargo from railway warehouses, grain from elevators, landowners' herds of cattle and food, stud farms and farms, products of sugar factories, all vehicles, all trophy property ( weapons, fuel, baggage and clothing, chemical property and communications property, food, etc. ) <sup>882</sup>. In addition, new negotiations between the military representatives of the

parties began. "On October 2, 1939, at 15:50, a conversation took place between the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal of the Soviet Union, comrade. Voroshilov and Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army Commander of the 1st rank comrade. Shaposhnikov with

representatives of the German military command in the person of General Kestring, Colonel Aschenbrenner and Lieutenant Colonel Krebs, who came to the following agreement:

§ 1. Parts of the Red Army, which stopped on the line reached by 18 o'clock on September 29, 1939, starting from the morning of October 5, 1939, are withdrawn to the line of the river. Igorka, Rzadov, r. Volkushanka, the village of Charny Brud,

Shchebra 1, Topiluvka, further on the border of East Prussia to the river. Pissa, east bank of the river. Pissa to its mouth, eastern bank of the river. Narew to the village of Ostrov (near Ostrolenka), Troshin, Stylengi, Sokolovo, Rostock, east bank of the river. Bug to the village of Rostki to the mouth of the river. Solokiya, southern bank of the river. Solokia to Poddubtse, further from Poddubtse to Lyubycha-Krolevska, Sandst, Zaluzha, Volya Oleshchytska, Sinyava, then the eastern bank of the river. San to its origins, including the Uzhok pass. All the points listed in

this article remain with the units of the Red Army. § 2. Parts of the Red Army located to the west of the line indicated in the 1st paragraph of this protocol, starting from the morning of October 5, 1939, are withdrawn in such a way that, making a transition of about 20 km every day, complete their withdrawal: a) on the state border northwest of Grodno by October 8 in the evening; b) Release the city of Suwalki by the evening of October 5 and hand it over to representatives of the local authorities on October 6

German command;

c) to the state border north-east of the city of Ostrov by the evening of October 8; d) on the river. Bug to the west of Drogichin by the evening of October

9; d) on the line of the river. Bug from Kristinopol to Terespol west of Brest by the evening of October 11.

§ 3. The movement of the troops of both armies must be organized in such a way that there is between the advanced parts of the German army and the tail of the columns of the Red Army, the distance is on average up to 25 km.

Both sides organize their movement in such a way that parts of the German army go: a) to the line of the river. Bug from Kristinopol to Terespol (west of Brest) - by October 12 in the evening; b) on the river. Bug west of Drogichin

- by October 10 in the evening; c) to the state border north-east of

the city of Ostrov - by October 9 in the evening; d) to the city of Suwalki - October 6 in the evening;

e) to the state border northwest of Grodno

- by October 9 in the evening. § 4. All questions that may arise during the transfer by the Red

Army and the acceptance by the German Army of points, cities, etc. etc., are resolved by representatives of both sides on the spot, for which special delegates are allocated by the Command on each main highway of movement of both armies.

The command of the Red Army takes the necessary measures in the cities and places that pass to the units of the German Army, to their safety, and pays special attention to ensuring that cities, towns and important military defensive and economic structures (bridges, airfields, barracks, warehouses, railway nodes, railway stations, telegraph, telephone, power stations, rolling stock, etc.), both in them and on the way to them, would be preserved from damage and destruction until they were transferred to representatives of the German army.

§ 5. When withdrawing the troops of the Red Army, the aviation of the Red Army can only fly up to the line of the rear guards of the columns of the Red Army units and at an altitude of not more than 500 meters, the aviation of the German Army, when moving to the east of the columns of the German Army, can fly only to the line of the vanguards of the columns of the German Army and at an altitude of not more than 500 meters. Upon occupation by both armies of the line indicated in § 1 of this protocol, the aviation of both armies does not fly over the indicated line. At 20.40 on October 2, the troops received Directive No. 083 of the People's Commissar of Defense, outlining the Soviet-German Protocol, duplicated by the corresponding orders of the Military Councils of the Fronts<sup>884</sup>.

At 23.30 on October 2, the commander of the Belorussian Front, Kovalev, sent the following request to Moscow: ***"The established border along the river. The Bug of the city of Brest-Litovsk is extremely disadvantageous for us for the following reasons: the city of Brest is divided into two parts by the border - the western bypass of the forts goes to the Germans; with the proximity of the border, it is impossible to fully use the richest barracks in the city of Brest; the railway junction and the city itself will be in the sphere of machine-gun fire; river crossings. The Bug will not be covered by the necessary territory. The wonderful airfield near Malashevichi will go to the Germans. The front commander asks to reconsider the border in the Brest-Litovsk region, "leaving part of the territory on the western bank of the river for the USSR.*** The next day, an answer came from Moscow that "the border near Brest was established by agreement and it is impossible to change it"<sup>886</sup>. But in order to keep the entire Brest fortress behind them, the Soviet troops blocked the Bug and blew up the lintels of the fortress moat. Eventually

water went through the bypass channel in front of the Terespol fortification, and the Soviet representative gave this channel to the Germans for the bed of the river. Bug, along which the border

was drawn<sup>887</sup>. The conclusion of the Soviet-German treaty of friendship and border of September 28, 1939 and the new military-political situation in Eastern Europe led to new assessments of the situation by the personnel of the Red Army. The shock of the events of September 17 has already passed, and now completely different voices have begun to be heard among the

military. While waiting for information about the negotiations in Moscow, the fighters expressed the following thoughts: "it's a pity if you have to return, I want to go forward", "what will happen to the population if we leave these areas", "do we really have to retreat to the Bug again. The working people will again be under the yoke of the landowners and capitalists, and they will be subjected to fascist reprisals", "Warsaw used to belong to Russia and we must take it". Of course, the new direction of political work had its results. Thus, Pashkovsky, a Red Army soldier of the 96th Infantry Regiment, believed that "the party and the government correctly decided to withdraw our troops across the Western Bug River, now no one can accuse us of using the liberation war to seize foreign territory." An employee of the Chemical Directorate of the Red Army, military engineer 2nd rank Petrov also believed that "the border was drawn taking into account all the points, and it is correct. Western Belarus and Western Ukraine went to the USSR. It was impossible to divide the Polish people between the two countries." But there were other sentiments as well. The Red Army soldier of the 96th Infantry Regiment, Nasibulin, was dissatisfied: "We walked, walked forward, and now we are going back, because there are a lot of Ukrainians and Belarusians here. Why can't we release them as well." A Red Army soldier of the 283rd Rifle Regiment, Rudavka, wondered, "why is it so that a border was drawn along the river. Vistula, and now along the river. Bug. Isn't this a concession of the USSR

to Germany? The assistant commander of the 14th Infantry Regiment, Sheplanov, believed that "our government is in vain to yield to this scoundrel, he will attack us." Communications chief of the 9th howitzer artillery regiment Shelekhov: "It's a pity that the units are retreating to the new border, a piece is good." In the opinion of Deputy Political Commissar Neverov, "everything is fine, but Warsaw was given away - this is a heavy loss"<sup>889</sup>. Employee of the 3rd Division of Red Army Major Volodin declared: "I am infected with red imperialism: we need to capture Warsaw." Colonel<sup>890</sup>. Pleshakov, a teacher at the Air Force Academy of the Red Army, believed that "now, having liberated Belarus and Ukraine, we will have to think about access to the Baltic Sea, especially since in Lithuania there are also former Belarusian territories, now you can also press on Romania, it will quickly give up Bessarabia"<sup>891</sup>. Major Gerasimov, an employee of the 2nd department of the 5th directorate of the Red Army, expressed similar thoughts: "We should not be limited only to Western Belarus and Western Ukraine. It is necessary at all costs to secure for the USSR an area at least [up to] the Vistula[s]. Warsaw should also be ours, because this word is Russian. Now the moment has come to take back all the territory taken from us several years ago." "It seems to me," said the junior commander of the 60th Infantry Division, Rastyagaev, "that something is wrong here, we have lost a lot to Germany"<sup>893</sup>. Kulibaba, a Red Army soldier from a separate communications battalion of the 13th Rifle Corps, wondered, "when will we correct the border with Romania, and Bessarabia needs to be liberated"<sup>894</sup>.

The junior commander of the 208th Sivanko airbase believed that "the government did wrong, gave the city of Vilna to Lithuania. Fighters and commanders shed their blood

<sup>895</sup>

fell, and now they gave everything away. According to the teacher of the Academy of the General Staff, brigade commander S.N. Krasilnikov, "the city of Vilna should not be returned to Lithuania, it is necessary to create a Lithuanian<sup>896</sup> Soviet Republic on this territory, and then annex... Professor of the Academy of the General Staff Divisional Commander D.M. the whole of Lithuania" Karbyshev believed that "now our situation is such that we can do what we want, such states as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania should be included in some large state. It has long been proven that small countries cannot exist independently and are only a cause of discord. An employee of the Chemical Department of the Red Army, Captain Revelsky, asked himself: "I wonder how the issue with Lithuania will be resolved now. Apparently, Lithuania is very afraid and, probably, will no longer serve England and France. It would not hurt now to liquidate Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, so that they do not interfere with all sorts of intrigues of the USSR and at the same time we would have ports on the Baltic Sea. In the opinion of Svetlov, an employee of the General Staff, "it is necessary to occupy the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, since this is our territory."<sup>899</sup> As we can see, the servicemen quite quickly got their bearings in the new situation and said aloud what the official propaganda naturally kept silent about. Actually, that is why their statements were classified as "unhealthy". Here we should dwell on the attitude of the local population towards the incoming Soviet troops. According to documents, for example, of the 87th Infantry Division, "in all settlements where

parts of our division passed, the working population greeted them with great joy, as genuine liberators from the oppression of the Polish lords and capitalists, as deliverers from poverty and hunger. We see the same thing in the materials of the 45th

Infantry Division: ***"The population is happy everywhere and welcomes the Red Army as a liberator. A peasant from the village of Ostrozhets, Sidorenko, said: "Soviet power would rather be established, otherwise the Polish pans sat on our necks for 20 years, sucked the last blood out of us, and now the time has finally come when the Red Army liberated us. Thanks comrade. Stalin for liberation from the bondage of the Polish***  
900

***landlords and capitalists .***

On the evening of September 17, in Stolbtsy, the signed 40  
peasants the following appeal:

***"Daragi and vyaliki, Comrade Stalin, we are pratsounyya and sya-liane of Drazdou Staupetsky district, the day we were summoned hell krivavaga panskaga yoke we send you, daraga rights-holes pratsouny usyago sveta, fiery words of padzyaki for rushing dapamoga to us at baratsbe with Polish fascism"90 ' .***

At a rally in the village of Molotkovo, a 50-year-old peasant said: "We lived for 20 years under the yoke of the Polish lords, but we never stopped thinking that our Ukrainian brothers, living in the great Soviet country, would come and free us from the Polish pan yoke. And this liberation was brought to us by the Red Army on September 17 of this year. Thanks to the commander of the Red Army, Comrade Voroshilov. Thanks to the Soviet government, to all the Soviet people for our liberation." A village teacher who spoke at the same place said: "For 20 years we have been teaching children bourgeois Polish dope. Although we were forbidden to listen to the radio from the Soviet Union, we listened to it and knew what was happening in the great Soviet country, how the working people live, how children are taught there, we hoped that the time would come and our children and our people would live just as happily and joyfully, as they live in the great Soviet country. Long live the great, invincible Soviet Union!"902 At a rally in Novaya Vileyka, Bekker, a 70-year-old worker, said:

"We have been waiting for the Red Army for twenty years. All the time we looked to the East and waited for our comrades to come and help us free ourselves from cruel oppression. We have been waiting for this today." In the village of Plitanitsy, the peasant woman Kornilova declared: "I am glad to the point of tears that comrades have come to us. Get lost, sirs! We also want to live like humans." She was supported by all those present, and another peasant said: "Yes, no matter how the pans concealed the truth about the Bolsheviks, we knew and we know that Lenin and Stalin gave the people a happy life"903 . On September 21, 1939, a statement was handed over to the Soviet border guards: "We, the citizens of the village of Staiki, decided at a general meeting to thank all the brothers who helped us free ourselves from the Polish lords. We decided at the meeting to join the Soviet Union and ask the comrades of the settlement and 904 of Korea to establish a new order. On September 24, priest Dmitry Pavelko from the village.

The city of Lubomlsky  
poviat

wrote a poem

"Zahidna Ukraine to Great Soviet Russia":

Until you, dear Russia, I  
will stretch out my  
hands. For you are my sister  
and Nadia, Save me  
from torment. You scho pozbulasya nedoli Sho  
threw off the kaidans. Rejoice  
at me, faithful from captivity,  
Rejoice at mortal wounds. Take  
me to your home, Give  
me a little bit in you. I won't  
swear to anyone there,  
Because I'm a small piece. Accept and  
child of my little ones  
- Vaughns do not mait the house. I won't give them such  
cheap little ones. Hire them  
to anyone. Hai and the  
wons will know the shares, Shaw  
has twisted the people. Hai do not curse me in captivity, Shaw I gave birth to them.

**And how you will take us to  
yourself, How you  
dream of Nadia, Todi and we will go  
to death for you, Accept us,**

**Russia**<sup>905</sup> . The same sentiments were observed in the zone of action of the Belorussian Front, where the local population declared: "We did not expect such a liberation, if not for the Soviet Union, we would have had to die without seeing freedom." At a rally in Glubokoye, a 76-year-old local resident said: "Thank you, dear comrades, thank you Comrade Stalin. We have been waiting for you for 20 years and now we have waited for the long-awaited guests. Now we, together with you, will destroy the enslavers. Thanks, comrades." It is clear that the inhabitants of the easternmost regions of Poland met the Soviet troops more cordially. As they moved west, the political agencies noted calmer moods, but even there the working people were glad to see the arrival of the Red Army . Upon learning that the Soviet troops would soon be withdrawn to the east, the

local population of the western bank of the Bug expressed "exceptional regret at the abandonment of the occupied settlements by the Red Army. In the village of Dorogucha, Ivan Sotoka, a middle peasant, said: "When there were Germans in our villages, they took cows, chickens, geese and food products from us. They did not touch anything at the landowners. Now, when the units of the Red Army came, they took absolutely nothing from us. We love the Red Army and we will follow it anywhere . "907 In the zone of action of the 8th Infantry Division, local residents asked: "Dear comrades, you are not leaving us forever, we will do everything to ensure that you will soon be with us back"908 . In Cieszanow, the population, having learned about the transfer of this territory to Germany, massively besieged the Soviet units with requests to take them with them to the USSR: "Only you can save our lives and our children. Our future is where the Red Army is, where Stalin is." Since September 30, local residents have been asking questions about the possibility of evacuating to the Soviet Union.

On October 2, the Political Directorate of the Ukrainian Front issued a directive on organizing the evacuation of the population through local temporary administrations. At 1.30 on October 3, the Political Directorates of the Belorussian and Ukrainian Fronts received a directive from the Political Directorate of the Red Army No. 0271, in which it was reported that the People's Commissar of Defense had instructed those wishing to evacuate through certain points on the territory of the USSR. Refugees should be placed in villages and cities, the evacuation should be carried out so that it does not interfere with the movement of troops. "No agitation for the departure of the population from the territory liberated by us and occupied by the Germans is not allowed." On the same day in

At 5:00 pm, the front commanders received a similar order from the People's Commissar of Defense No. 084. Members of the temporary administrations, people's policemen and activists were evacuated. However, there were many more people who wanted to leave for the USSR, and they themselves moved east. Many were traveling with relatives and acquaintances in their carts, captured and military vehicles. On October 6-7 alone, 7,000 families (about 20,000 people) were registered in temporary administrations in the territory east of the Western Bug. For them, special reception points for evacuees with food and medical care were organized. The accommodation of peasants in the villages was easy, while there were problems with the accommodation of townspeople. In general, almost 42 thousand people were evacuated from the 5th and 6th armies, however, among the Polish population, 28 people expressed a desire to leave for the western bank of the Bug<sup>909</sup> .

Until October 5, Soviet troops were engaged in the evacuation of trophies from the territory located to the west of the established line. Unfortunately, the total dimensions of these trophies are unknown. So, only the troops of the 5th Army were taken out of the river. Western Bug 64 locomotives, 70 passenger, 1,130 covered wagons, 534 platforms, 609 coal, 104 tanks and various cargoes (artifacts, sugar, oats, grain, flour, alcohol, railway materials, stud farm, ore, iron, coal, coke , livestock, etc.) with a total volume of 2,174 wagons<sup>910</sup> . In the strip of the Belorussian Front, 205 locomotives and 3,942 wagons were evacuated to the USSR, and "a lot of valuable cargo" was delivered. Formations of the 6th Cavalry Corps took 494 horses behind the Bug, mostly English-Arab half- breeds . All in all, as was officially announced, over 900 guns, over 10,000 machine guns, over 300,000 rifles, over 150 million rounds of ammunition, about 1 million shells and up to 300 aircraft<sup>912</sup> became the spoils of war of the Red Army .

The troops of the Ukrainian Front captured 657 guns and mortars, 5,242 machine guns, 131,232 rifles and carbine, 20 million rounds of ammunition, 117,450 shells and mines, 110,100 hand <sup>913</sup>. Trophies of the Belarussian grenades from the front, 39 guns, 204 machine guns, 20,270 rifles, 2,241 revolvers, 4 wagons of rifle cartridges, 49 wagons of shells, 237,000 small-caliber cartridges<sup>914</sup> . In addition, the Polish river fleet lost 51 warships and over 113 auxiliary vessels on the Pripyat River . Polish military personnel (this number included <sup>454,700</sup> were taken prisoner not only soldiers and officers of the Polish Army, but also

policemen, gendarmes and all persons captured with weapons in their hands), of which the troops of the Belorussian Front captured 60,202, and the Ukrainian -

394,498 people<sup>916</sup>. As noted on September 20 in his report to Stalin from the troops of the 4th Cavalry Corps, the head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army, army commissar of the 1st rank JI.3. Mehliś, ***"Polish officers, apart from individual groups, having lost the army and the prospect of escaping to Romania, are trying to surrender to us for two reasons: 1) They are afraid of being captured by the Germans and 2) they are afraid of the fire of the Ukrainian peasants and the population, which became more active with the advent of the Red Army. army and crack down on Polish officers. It got to the point that in Burshtyn, Polish officers, sent by the corps to the school and guarded by a small guard, asked to increase the number of soldiers***

***guarding them as prisoners in order to avoid possible massacre of the population with them.***

***"And at some point there were so many*** prisoners that the People's Commissar of Defense, by his order No. 75928 of September 25, ordered "prisoners of war peasants of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, if they present documents certifying that they were really mobilized by the Poles, are allowed to be released."<sup>918</sup> However, the released prisoners of war clogged the roads, so already on September 28 telegram of the Chief of Staff of the Ukrainian Front ***N ° 457***, the order of the commander of the front was brought to the attention of the troops: "The order on the release of prisoners of war-peasants of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus CANCEL. All prisoners of war should be carefully taken into account and sent to the transit points of the NKVD. Instructions on the use of prisoners of war will be given additionally". It was required "to take all measures to detain all prisoners of war wandering independently along the roads and still in the cities at large, take them into custody and send them in echelons or marching order. Organize meals for prisoners of war. Contact the local administrations to help them catch the hiding officers in the cities and towns . "<sup>919</sup>

From October 5 to October 12, Soviet troops were withdrawn beyond the new border line. Parts of the 16th Rifle Corps were withdrawn from the Suwalki ledge to the demarcation line by 4 p.m. on October 9. "The withdrawal of parts of the corps went exactly according to plan", "there were no incidents and conflicts with the Germans during the withdrawal of our troops, except for the premature arrival of the Germans in Suwalki and disputes over certain settlements on the border (Zhylyny, Czarny Brud, Jablonska, Ivanuvka), which were eliminated in private negotiations on the spot and official negotiations in Suwalki - 9.10.39. The Suwalki were handed over to the Wehrmacht on 6 October. The troops of the 10th Army moved east at 10 pm on October 5 and by the evening of October 6 they were evacuated beyond the river. Western Bug, leaving Kosuv and Malkin-Gurna. The withdrawal of the 4th Army continued longer: Siedlce and Lukow were transferred to the Germans on October 6, Byala Podlaska - on October 10, and the Soviet troops completely left for the Bug. 4 p.m. October 12. In the zone of the 5th army, units of the 4th infantry division of the Wehrmacht moved to Vlodava, and on October 9, troops of the 27th infantry division entered Chelm. Moreover, while there were neither Soviet nor German troops in the city, on October 7, local Polish activists "carried out pogroms and robberies, there are those who were killed from the workers' militia and revolutionary-minded

workers." By the evening of October 13, German troops reached the demarcation line along its entire length . Today, the mutual movement of Soviet and German troops on October 5-13, 1939 is overgrown with fantastic details. So, S.Z. Sluch claims that "in order to speed up the transfer of

the released divisions, the German command turned to the command of the Red Army with a request to allow Wehrmacht units to enter Germany through Soviet territory. Such permission was given to them from the morning of October 6, 1939. For two weeks until October 20, German troops were sent to Germany by shortened route in order to go to the West as soon as possible . I wonder where the German troops were located, that it was faster for them to get to Germany through Soviet territory? Isn't it in India? Anyone who knows the geography of Eastern Europe will say that it is physically impossible there. However, in formulating his statement, S.Z. Chance referred to one archival document of the Ukrainian Front, well, we will also turn to this archival file, where there are several documents

related to this issue. Indeed, at 23.10 on October 5, Chief of the General Staff Shaposhnikov and Commissar of the General Staff sent the order to the commander of the troops of the Ukrainian Front:

***"In view of the request of the German high command, the People's Commissar of Defense ordered to allow the advance of German units along the highway and railroad through Senyava in the northeast direction across the state border to German territory and along the Yaroslav, Oleshitsa, Tseshanov highway also to German territory from the morning of October 6. Through local delegates, resolve all issues***



**advancing, observe ... and observe that there is no crossing of columns with our troops. Confirm receipt and execution"912 .** At 1.30 on October 6, the chief

of staff of the Ukrainian Front, Divisional Commander N.F. Vatutin ordered the commanders of the 5th and 6th armies: "In view of the request of the German command, the people's commissar of defense ordered to allow the advance of the German troops through Senyava along the highway in a northeast direction to Tarnograd and along the highway Yaroslav, Oleshinty [Oleshitsa], Tseshanow from the morning of October 6 to German territory. Commander-6, through their delegates, to resolve all issues related to this promotion so that the columns do not cross. Set a condition for the German command by the end of 8.10 not to advance further than the Tseshanow, Yuzefov, Shebreshin line. Commander-5 should plan the retreat of the 140th Rifle Division so that by the end of 8.10 it will withdraw beyond the border line in the area of Lyubycha, Lyubachev "923 .

At the same time, Vatutin had a direct conversation with an unnamed representative of the command of the 6th Army (probably with Commander Golikov. - **M.M.**): "I ask you to report to the brigade commander Vatutin whether I correctly understood the transfer of the order of the people's commissar by Colonel Danilov that tomorrow the German troops 96 and 97 divisions will pass along the disposition from Sinyava to Tarnograd, from Yaroslav to Olezhishche [Oleshitsa]. I report: such a movement is not profitable for us. I ask you to allow them tomorrow 6.10 to move only from Sinyava to Tarnograd, and after [as] 96 SD is withdrawn to the state border Olezhishche [Oleshitsa], Molodycha, on 7.10 let them move from Yaroslav to Oleshishche [Oleshitsa]. Then 96 SD will be withdrawn to its Krakovets area. I ask you to report personally to Comrade. Vatutin and me to report the result. - At the apparatus commander Vatutin. - Tov. Divisional Commander, please read what

I transmitted on the tape and give me instructions. I am waiting. - You understood the order of the People's Commissar correctly. The People's Commissar of Defense allowed the Germans to pass on 6.10. If you can agree with the Germans on their movement from Yaroslav only on 7.10, then there are no objections to this. If the Germans insist on moving 6.10, then this must be done. Take measures to ensure that there is no crossing of the columns, and liberate the areas, find out the places where the Germans stopped and prevent them from mixing with our units. All. - Tov. division commander, I understand you and will do everything exactly. "Make arrangements to communicate the order to the troops immediately. Monitor implementation and establish closer communication with representatives of the German command. All. - From us, 2 staff commanders will be sent to settle with the Germans. Colonel Gusev and Major Shishov will go. All. - Fine. Goodbye"924 . And the last document.

At 9.00 on October 9, the operational duty officer of the General Staff of the

Red Army, Major Guneev, asked: "Tell me if the German troops passed through our territory on 8.10 with a direction from Yaroslav to the northeast. I'm waiting for the operational report at the device"925 . Thus, the available documents do not support the version of S.Z. Case. It follows from them that the

Soviet command was ready to let the German units in the direction of the river. The Western Bug was already on October 6, that is, immediately after the formations of the Red Army retreating to the southeast, across the territory, which, in accordance with the Soviet-German treaty of September 28, was assigned to Germany. The only Soviet territory through which the Wehrmacht units were supposed to pass was the area protruding to the west between the river. San and Cieszanow. The advance of the Wehrmacht through this territory was postponed until 8 October. However, whether German troops passed there remains unknown from these documents. Moreover, this movement of the Wehrmacht to the southeast of German-occupied Poland had nothing to do with the transfer of German troops to the Western Front, and the exit of German troops to the Soviet-German demarcation line ended on October 13. The transfer of Wehrmacht troops to the West began on September 20, and by October 16, 3 headquarters of army corps, 11 infantry, 2 mountain infantry and 1 motorized divisions had already arrived there. On September 29, the headquarters of the 4th Army arrived there, on October 5 - the headquarters of Army Group North and the 10th Army, on October 19 - the headquarters of the 8th Army, on October 20 - the headquarters of the 14th Army and Army Group South. , and on October 25 - the headquarters of the 3rd Army926 .

After the withdrawal of the Red Army beyond the line of the new border, which from October 16 was transferred under The chief of the General Staff <sup>927</sup>, protection and the deployment of troops on the annexed territory on October 31, 1939, ordered the border troops of the

NKVD "in the period from November 10 to January 31 of this year, to carry out reconnaissance of a new border strip within the limits of the former Soviet-Polish border to the new border with Germany ... Reconnaissance should be carried out according to the following program:

**1. Check the condition of railway junctions and unloading stations (unloading device of stations, number of tracks, dead ends, throughput, exit and access roads, communication facilities, storage facilities and their capacity, the possibility of additional expansion and equipment). 2. Outline and reconnoitre possible areas for the collection**

**of troops after their unloading (the condition of the roads from the unloading stations to the areas of collection, bridges and defile, conditions for accommodation and camouflage, means of communication). 3.**

**Verify the communication**

**centers both at headquarters locations and in areas**

**most advantageous for the concentration and deployment of troops (equipment, availability of wires, availability of specialists, time required to establish communication with individual points, measures to strengthen existing communications ).**

**4. Reconnoitre: a) all**

**significant rivers and water barriers, the condition of bridges and crossings; b) forest areas; c)**

**natural topographic boundaries; d) the most**

**advantageous areas for the concentration of troops. 5.**

**Check the availability of warehouses, capacity and their**

**equipment. 6. Verify the production capacity of local bakeries and bakeries. 7. Survey**

**the most important soil areas. 8. Reconnoiter the airfields, bases**

**and their condition and the possibility of redeployment ... Send the processed reconnaissance materials with your conclusions to the General Staff of the Red Army by February 1, 1940 "928 .**

#### **The underside**

**of the war** Here we should dwell on another side of the Polish campaign of the Red Army, associated with various military crimes of the Soviet military. According to some authors, "lynching, looting and robbery, as manifestations of the class struggle, were not only not prosecuted, but even encouraged"<sup>929</sup> . In order to understand this complex issue, let us turn to the documents of the Military Tribunal of the Ukrainian Front. On September 21, Kharchenko, a cadet of a separate

anti-aircraft squadron of the Army cavalry group, searched the house of a teacher in the village of Dobrovlyany and took two watches and a bicycle from her, for which he was sentenced to death<sup>930</sup> .

On September 21, having disarmed the Polish troops, units of the 14th Cavalry Division let the soldiers go home, while the officers and gendarmes were left until further notice at a school in Sasuva. At 7 pm, the prisoners entered the basement of the school, killed a worker who was guarding weapons, and opened fire from the windows. The battalion commissar Ponomarev with the Red Army men suppressed the uprising of the officers and, having arrived at the headquarters of the 14th Cavalry Division, told about what had happened. At the same time, he expressed the idea that all officers and gendarmes are bastards that need to be destroyed. Impressed by what they heard on September 22 in the village of Boshchevitsy, 4 Red Army soldiers, under various pretexts, took 4 captured officers from the custody of the people's police and shot them. As a result, the Military Tribunal sentenced the main instigator of this crime to 4 years in the

camps, and the accomplices received 3 years of probation . On September 22, during the battles for Grodno, at about 10 o'clock, the commander of the communications platoon, junior lieutenant Dubovik, received an order to escort 80-90 prisoners to the rear. Departing 1.5-2 km from the city, Dubovik arranged an interrogation of the prisoners in order to identify the officers and persons who had taken part in the murder of the Bolsheviks. Promising to release the prisoners, he sought confessions and shot 29 people. The rest of the prisoners were returned to Grodno. This was known to the command of the 101st Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division, but no action was taken against Dubovik. Moreover, the commander of the 3rd battalion, senior lieutenant Tolochko, gave a direct order to shoot the officers<sup>932</sup> . The intervention of the army command was required.

On September 26, a resolution of the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front "On cases of arbitrariness and arbitrariness" was adopted, which indicated specific facts of executions without trial or investigation that took place on September 20-21. So, the head of the special department of the 37th rifle division, lieutenant of state security Popov, shot the Red Army deserter Antonyuk. On September 20, Major Pokorny, suspecting unreliable persons in the group of walking citizens, shot two of them. In Zlochuva, the head of the special department of the 2nd Cavalry Corps, Koberniuk, shot 10 prisoners, and the prosecutor of the corps, Ilyichev, did not prevent this, believing Koberniuk's statement that he had instructions from the command.

The military council of the front demanded "resolutely stop any form of arbitrariness, and especially unauthorized executions. The NKVD and the Military Prosecutor's Office should carefully investigate the facts described above and bring the perpetrators to the strictest

933

responsibility".

On the same day, the Military Council of the front adopted a resolution "On the case of looting and rape by the Red Army soldier of the 59th cavalry regiment of the 14th cavalry division Yegor Efimovich Frolov." On the night of September 21, in Ezerno, Frolov detained refugees, intimidating them, he appropriated some of the things and raped a woman. Frolov was sentenced to death, and the sentence was carried out<sup>934</sup>. On September 27, in the 146th Infantry Regiment, after a shootout with a group of Polish soldiers and their capture, 15 soldiers were shot from a cannon on the orders of Senior Lieutenant Bulgakov and Senior Political Officer Koldyurin. Bulgakov

<sup>935</sup> was arrested, his case was transferred to the Military . Platoon commander of the 103rd tank battalion of the 22nd Tribunal of the tank brigade, junior military technician V. A. Novikov, in the Lentuna region, with the aim of robbery, killed an elderly landowner with a revolver and robbed her house. Trying to hide the crime, Novikov tried to kill the Red Army soldier Peshkov. A military tribunal sentenced Novikov to death by firing squad .

On September 30, the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front issued Directive No. 071, in which it demanded that the military prosecutor and the Tribunal "really engage in the fight against looting and theft. Apply harsh penalties to marauders and hoarders. Do not pull investigations into the cases of marauders. Conduct show trials with field visits. Political agencies to launch extensive explanatory work among the Red Army. Cause in relation to marauders hatred and contempt on the part of fighters and commanders. Widely popularize among the military personnel and the local population the verdicts of the tribunals with severe punishments for marauders"<sup>937</sup>. The next day, the Military Council of the Belorussian Front issued a similar order No. 0041. On October 2, the head of the political department of the 15th Rifle Corps, Regimental Commissar Goldenstein, in order No. , self-management. So, on September 28, a <sup>938</sup>.

machine-gun platoon of the 61st Infantry Regiment of the 45th Infantry Division in the Senchitsa area met a group of disarmed Polish soldiers with 2 officers. Political instructor Gordienko and platoon commander Bondarchuk ordered the soldiers to go wherever they wanted (which they had no right to), and the officers were taken into the forest and shot, and 5,000 zlotys were taken from them, of which only 600 zlotys were handed over to the unit, and the rest were appropriated. The regimental commissar ordered political officer Gordienko and platoon commander Bondarchuk to be brought to justice"<sup>9</sup> .

On October 2, the political instructor of the school of the 131st cavalry regiment, Berdnikov, arbitrarily shot the family of the landowner in the amount of 6 people, for which he was sentenced to death<sup>940</sup>. On October 6, junior political instructor I.P. was sentenced to 6 years in labor camps. Zagursky (born 1914) for the murder of Prince K.S. Lubomirsky in his house, where the prince was recovering from his wounds<sup>941</sup>. The military commissar of the 81st artillery regiment of the Ukrainian Front, Mineev, who shot 10 captured officers, the Red Army soldier of the 6th Cavalry Corps of the Belorussian Front, Flo-ruk, who organized the execution of 15 people detained by the local <sup>942</sup> committee, as well as those guilty of robberies and misappropriation of trophy property .

At 16.43 on October 12, the commanders of the troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts received an order from the people's commissar of defense: "In the event that our military units occupy landed estates, mansions, castles and buildings of the estate itself, which are of cultural and historical value, should not be occupied and all measures should be taken to preserve them in that form. where they currently are. Troops to occupy residential buildings, stables and buildings that are available at the estates, without allowing any destruction .

In total, only from September 15 to October 1, the Military Tribunal of the Ukrainian Front convicted 49 servicemen for counter-revolutionary statements (2), robberies and violence against the population (16, of which 4 were to be shot), desertion (16, of which 3 were to be shot), non-execution order (6), abuse of office (2), looting (3), negligence, resistance to the commander (2), negligent murder (1) and violation of the rules of guard duty, accompanied by robbery (1 to be shot). Nevertheless, investigations continued. October 8, 1939 military prosecutor of the 6th army military

lawyer 1st rank Nechiporenko sent a letter to Stalin and Voroshilov:

***"Having data of special political and state importance, I consider it my party duty to inform you about the striking facts of gross arbitrariness and criminal actions on the part of a number of command and political units, and especially in the 2nd Cavalry Corps, admitted to the territory of military operations in Western Ukraine.***

**1.21 September 1939 The Military Council of the 6th Army, represented by Commander Commander Golikov and a member of the Military Council, Brigadier Commissar Zakharychev, while in parts of the 2nd Cavalry Corps, issued a clearly criminal decision on the production and procedure for lynching - the execution of 10 people (surnames are not indicated in the decision) . On this basis, the head of the special department of the 2nd cavalry corps, Koberniuk, went to the city of Zlochov, arrested various employees of the Polish prison, police, etc., somehow Klimetsky V.V., according to the position of head. prison, Kuchmirov-sky K. B., pom. early prison, Lukashevsky M.S., vice city prosecutor, Plakht I. - an official of the beaten headman, and others in the amount of 10 people, and all these persons, at the expense of the limit established by the Military Council of the 6th Army, were shot in the prison building. This**

**lynching was attended by ordinary employees of the prison. The audit established that the Military Council of the 6th Army coordinated its decision on the execution of 10 people without indicating their names with the beginning. special department of the front by the commissar of the 2nd cavalry corps Krainyukov. After that, they also gave instructions to the employees of the special department of the 2nd cavalry corps who were quickly arrested, as enemies of the people, to be shot in a simplified manner without trial, which was done by the emp**

**This criminal decision of the Military Council on lynching was quickly passed on to the leading circles of the commanders and commissars of formations and units of the 2nd cavalry corps, and this led to grave consequences when a number of commanders, military commissars and even Red Army soldiers, following the example of their leaders, began to lynch prisoners, suspicious detainees and had cases (reprisals) of civilians of kulak origin. Over the past 10 days, the military prosecutor's office of the army has revealed, in addition to those shot, 10 people. By the authority of the Military Council, even in the same 2nd cavalry corps, up to 20 people were shot in the order of lynching... they**

**rushed into shops, arranged flea markets, created queues and bought anything and everything in large quantities in retail shops that are not needed for a soldier, such as: several pairs of women's shoes, dresses, etc.**

**The military prosecutor's office, armed with the Stalin Constitution on its independence and the decision of the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of November 17, 1938, resolutely and mercilessly fought against all the above-mentioned crimes, dozens of servicemen were sentenced to various terms and even to death, but our sentences did not give much effect, since they were not promptly and firmly brought by our army command to the living feeling of fighters, commanders and political workers.**

**Tov. Khrushchev warned and taught our leaders of the 6th Army in somewhat different ways, however, in my opinion, they make a lot of noise, but the real thing in the units is almost imperceptible, since to this day the military prosecutor's office reveals similar cases of looting, confiscation of products from peasants, and sometimes peasants for taking products give receipts with a fictitious name of military units, with an illegible signature, and the peasants in this situation do not know to whom to file a claim for payment...**

**On the basis of the foregoing, I ask for your decision and your analysis of all the outrages I have outlined in order to restore Bolshevik order in our 6th Army by the power of the center and once and for all put an end to the mistakes I have stated and the crimes against our homeland that are being committed on the territory of Western Ukraine " Result of this <sup>944</sup>.**

letter was the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0059 dated November 10,

**1939: "October 16 in the name of Comrade. Stalin and mine received a letter from the military prosecutor of the 6th army comrade. Nechiporenko about the wrong actions of some persons in command during the military events on the territory of Western Ukraine. On**

**my orders, the Political Directorate of the Red Army conducted an investigation and established that in the 6th Army during the hostilities there were cases of reprisals against officers and police officers of the former Polish state, as well as against individuals from the civilian population.**

**The Military Council of the 6th Army represented by the Commander of the Army Corps Comrade. Golikov and a member of the Military Council of the Brigadier Commissar Comrade. Zakharychev, not only did not wage a sufficient fight against these manifestations of arbitrariness, but on September 20, 1939, he himself adopted a hasty, tho resolution.**

**Having received a report on the actions of a gang consisting of gendarmes, officers and Polish bourgeois nationalists, who had massacred the Ukrainian and Jewish population in the rear of our troops, the Military Council issued an erroneous, non-specific, and therefore impermissible directive: "All**

exposed leaders of a gang of pogrom-makers to be subjected to the highest measure of punishment - to be shot within 24 hours. Based on this decision, 9 people were shot.

The Military Council of the 6th Army, instead of instructing the military prosecutor's office to investigate all the facts of the counter-revolutionary activities of the captured persons and bring them to the court of the Military Tribunal in the prescribed manner, issued a general decision on the execution of the gang leaders without listing by name those to be shot. Such decisions of the Military Council of the 6th Army could be understood by subordinates as a signal for a simplified form of fighting bandits.

In units of the 2nd cavalry corps, which are part of the 6th army, for example, 10 cases of unauthorized actions of command personnel of various degrees in relation to detained Polish bandits were registered.

Considering that there was no deliberate evil will in the actions of those guilty of illegal actions, that all this took place in an atmosphere of hostilities and an acute class and national struggle of the local Ukrainian and Jewish population with former Polish gendarmes and officers, and that the given order was the result of a mistake and misunderstanding, I order: 1. To draw the attention of the entire command staff to the

inadmissibility of the repetition in the future of any  
samochin

actions that are contrary to the spirit and regulations of the Red Army. 2. For issuing hasty, ill-considered decisions that contradict the established procedures in the Red Army, the Military Council of the 6th Army - com-kor comrade. Golikov and Brigadier Commissar Zakharycha, I reprimand.

3. Directly guilty of illegal actions to the commander of the 131st cavalry regiment, major comrade. Dedeoglu, junior political officer of the 131st cavalry regiment comrade. Cherkasov, lieutenant of the same regiment comrade. Koltsov, commissar of a separate communications division of the 2nd cavalry corps, senior political instructor comrade. I reprimand Beznosenko.

4. To the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front to identify the rest of the persons directly responsible for the unauthorized actions of the 6th Army, and to impose disciplinary sanctions on them with their own power, reporting to me about the execution "945 .

The materials cited show that there was no question of any encouragement of various crimes committed by the Red Army soldiers. Of course, the situation of hostilities and the corresponding political propaganda indoctrination of Soviet military personnel gave some of them the impression of permissiveness. However, the command, special departments and the military prosecutor's office tried to suppress such crimes, although, of course, rather symbolic punishments were applied to some commanders. Unfortunately, this feature is observed in any army leading the fighting, and the Red Army was by no means an exception in this sense.

In addition, during the period from September 22 to October 1, 28 policemen and servicemen of the Polish army were convicted of counter-revolutionary crimes (20, of which 13 were to be shot), theft (4), robbery with theft (3) and rape (1) 946 . As a rule, repressions against Polish citizens were due to terrorist activities both against Soviet soldiers and against the new authorities.

So, for example, on September 18 in Rovno, second lieutenant of the Polish army Cherekhovsky, dressed in civilian clothes with a red band on his sleeve, entered the territory of a military hospital with three Polish officers, declared himself a "red commissar" and demanded the immediate release of the hospital by the staff. At the same time, Cherekhovsky and his accomplices opened fire with carbines and a pistol. Seeing that the provocation failed, he fled. On September 21, he reappeared in the hospital and was detained. During the investigation, it turned out that Cherekhovsky was a participant in the battles of 1920 near Grodno.

On September 23, he was sentenced to death by firing squad . Red

Army soldier of the 14th Infantry Regiment Ya.Kh. Triger was lured by the Poles into a hut near the railway station of Zhizhava and killed. The murder was committed with a blunt object, there was 948 in the head . In the breaches in forests, "small partisan detachments were operating for a long time," which, naturally, caused two the response of the Soviet special services. In addition, for combing the area, detachments of the workers' guards were also involved, catching "White-Polish bandits hiding in the forests and other places: officers, landowners, gendarmes and high-ranking officials of the Polish state ... Several hundred of these White-Polish bandits were identified. A significant part ... the worker guards killed on the spot.

To the Soviet Union In

the meantime, back on October 1, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks adopted a program for the Sovietization of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. It was decided to convene the Ukrainian and Belarusian People's Assemblies in

Lvov and Bialystok, which were supposed to:

"1) approve the transfer of landowners' lands to peasant committees; 2) to resolve the question of the nature of the power being created, i.e., whether this power should be Soviet or bourgeois;

3) to resolve the issue of joining the USSR, i.e., the entry of the Ukrainian regions into the Ukrainian SSR, entry of the Belarusian regions into the BSSR; 4)

resolve the issue of nationalizing banks and large-scale industry." At first, they intended to hold elections on October 15, and to convene people's assemblies on October 19, but in the final text of the decree, the election day was called October 22, and the day for convening meetings - October 26. Elections were to be held "on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage by secret ballot. All male and female citizens who have reached the age of 18 have the right to elect to the People's Assembly, regardless of race and nationality, religion, educational qualification, social origin, property status and past activities. Out of 5,000 voters, 1 deputy was elected. The initiative to convene People's Assemblies and create committees for the organization of elections was to be taken

over by the Provisional Administrations of Lvov and Bialystok. In addition to them, the Committees for the organization of elections were to include one representative from each region, 2 from peasant committees, 2 from workers' organizations, 2 from the intelligentsia and 3 representatives each from the Presidiums of the Supreme Soviets of the BSSR and the Ukrainian SSR. Candidates for deputies could be nominated by peasant committees, Provisional Administrations, meetings of workers at enterprises, meetings of the workers' guards, meetings of the intelligentsia. The election campaign should have been carried out under the slogans: the establishment of Soviet power in the territory of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, their entry into the Ukrainian SSR and the BSSR, respectively, approval of the confiscation of landed estates, demands for the nationalization of banks and large-scale industry. At the same time, it was necessary to start creating party, Komsomol, trade union organizations and temporary regional administrations in these territories.

It was ordered to appoint commissioners to all banks, who were supposed to control all banking activities: "a) check the status of current accounts and bank values; b) take measures for the opening and normal functioning of banks; c) provide the necessary current lending to industrial and economic enterprises. Consider it necessary to switch to the Soviet currency everywhere. Establish that no banking operation can be carried out without the permission of the commissioner of the bank. In the event that a particular bank cannot be restored to normal functioning, transfer its operations to other banks. Do not open foreign banks yet. Give out on private deposits no more than 300 rubles per month. "Enterprises whose owners have fled or are sabotaging their work are nationalized and the Provisional Administrations appoint managers for these enterprises." It was necessary to ensure the opening of shops, to begin the creation of a state trading network and to establish fixed prices for salt, matches, kerosene and shag. Organize a system of communications and vehicles, liquidate foreign consulates and prepare proposals on questions of prisoners of war and war **950**

women.

Accordingly, an appeal was prepared by the Committees for the organization of the "first truly free and democratic" elections to voters, which outlined a program of priority transformations in the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus. The election campaign that unfolded in these territories included not only mass political work among the population, but also the widespread use of film screenings and the performance of various creative teams from the USSR. But, of course, the best agitation for Soviet power was the division of the landlords' land among the peasants. The impression of the Soviet troops also influenced the mood of the population. As the worker Mastitsky noted in Vilna, "we were told all the time that the Red Army did not represent any military force, that its tanks were made of plywood, painted with green paint, and in general that everything in Russia was inflated. And now we have seen with our own eyes what kind of plywood tanks they are and what the Red Army is like. In the opinion of another Vilna worker, Boydanovich, "The Red Army is very sensitive to the population. During the capture of Vilna, the Red Army did not throw a single bomb and did not fire a single shot at the civilian population. And the gentlemen fooled our heads that if the Bolsheviks come, they will completely destroy everything.

In the village of Solovyi, a Polish peasant, B. Matskevich, declared: "We were told that the Red Army and the Bolsheviks were barbarians, that they were tearing down icons in houses, destroying churches, killing priests,

rape women. But in fact, the Red Army is the most cultured army of all that passed through this land, which will not even touch an apple. You treat them, and then they don't take it"<sup>951</sup>. Equally rave reviews were received by the performances of Soviet ensembles. Thus, a resident of Vilna, Staroshansky, believed that "your art has opened our eyes to the Soviet world even wider. With your dances, your joy, you helped us understand and appreciate the friendship of different nationalities in your country. We want to live as happily as you live." A political prisoner from Svetsyan said: "Now I see once again that it was not in vain that I fought and was imprisoned. Here it is, a happy life without lords and landowners. Instead of oppression and enslavement, culture and joy have come to us. The general mood was expressed by the teacher E.F. Subach: "Our brothers warmed our Belarusian soul with today's concert. They gave us energy and strength for the further struggle for a brighter future. Dear brothers! We are burning with the desire to join the USSR and be under the leadership of our dear and beloved comrade. Stalin and under the protection of the invincible Red Army.

Out of 7,538,586 voters, 94.8% took part in the elections, of which 90.8% voted "for" the proposed candidates, and 9.2% voted "against"<sup>954</sup>. It is difficult not to agree with the opinion of M.I. Semiryaga that "the results of the elections showed that the vast majority of the population of these regions agreed with the establishment of Soviet power and accession to the Soviet Union" <sup>955</sup>. Favorites October 22 People's Assemblies of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine proclaimed Soviet power on October 27-29 and asked to be included in the Soviet Union. On November 1-2, 1939, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR granted their request from the landlords. The territory occupied by Soviet troops "was liberated and capitalists," and its peoples "got the opportunity to reunite with the fraternal peoples of the GREAT LAND OF SOVIETS and strengthen the great cause of LENIN-STALIN, the cause of building communism, as a united friendly family" <sup>957</sup>. These events ended the solution of the Polish question in 1939. **Grouping of Soviet**

**troops by September 17, 1939 Number of Soviet**  
**troops by September 17, 1939 Grouping of Soviet**  
**troops by October 2, 1939<sup>857</sup>**

## Conclusion

Russia and Poland have been neighbors for more than a thousand years. As usual, Russian-Polish relations covered a wide range of phenomena from the struggle to determine their borders to deep cultural ties. Considering Soviet-Polish relations in the 1920s and 1930s, it is hard not to notice their deep connection with the previous development. Of course, the new socio-political and nationalist ideas, so popular at that time, left their unique imprint on the development of relations between the two countries. The period of a new redistribution of the world and Eastern Europe in particular, which opened with the First World War, most directly drew both Russia and Poland into its whirlpool. The colossal psychological and cultural shock experienced by all participants in the war of 1914-1918 became the basis for the level of cruelty that characterized the creation of new states and the establishment of new borders in Eastern Europe.

Soviet-Polish relations were initially aggravated by the problems of territorial delimitation of different regions of the former Russian Empire. Added to this was the almost 100-year-old propaganda in Poland of the idea of "historical guilt of Russia", which was quite widespread among the Polish intelligentsia, and after 1915 was planted in every possible way among the Polish intelligentsia.

di Polish population, first by the German-Austrian-Hungarian invaders and then by the leadership of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For Warsaw, this idea served as a justification for Polish nationalism and justification for territorial claims against its eastern neighbors. In addition, Soviet-Polish relations could not but bear the imprint of the turbulent era of the revolution and the Civil War in Russia and Eastern Europe. As a result, national ideas were closely intertwined with socio-political ones, which only aggravated mutual hostility. But still, the main contradiction between Moscow and Warsaw was the territorial demarcation hidden behind this motley ideological and political screen, which each side represented in its own way.

The Polish leadership proceeded from the fact that the territories separating Poland and Russia are inhabited by non-Russian peoples (Belarusians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Jews, etc.) interspersed with Poles, which served as a justification for its claims to the borders of 1772. That is, in this case, the ethnic composition of this region and the idea of Russia's historical retribution were closely intertwined. Of course, the Polish leadership understood that it was impossible to recreate the Commonwealth of the late 18th century, and a plan was developed to create a federation of these peoples under the auspices of Poland. However, the real activity of Warsaw, which was not slow to spoil relations with all national movements in Eastern Europe, showed that the planned federation would rely on Polish superiority and strength. The Soviet side also widely promoted the idea of a federation as an association of socialist states into a single country. That is, objectively, it was about the transformation of the Russian Empire, taking into account modern realities. An important difference of the Soviet project was the absence of a hint of anyone's national superiority, which made it acceptable not only for ordinary people, but also for various national elite groups.

It is also important to note that in the conditions of a fierce Civil War, the Soviet leadership sought to peacefully negotiate with Poland "on the border, but the expansionist claims of Warsaw did not allow this option to be realized. The Polish leadership proceeded from the obvious fact that, although the Entente countries were supporters of the coincidence of the Polish ethnographic and state borders in the East, the European territorial settlement was more important for them. This moment should have been used and seized as much territory as possible in order not only to restore Polish statehood, but also to inflict maximum damage on its neighbors, which, in the opinion of the Polish leadership, overwhelmed by ambitious plans, should have allowed Poland to achieve the status of a great power. Moreover, Poland was supposed to "inherit" this international status from the Russian Empire, which would allow it to "wash away the shame of subjugation to Russia." Moreover, the Civil War in Russia gave hope for the implementation of such plans.

Such calculations ultimately pushed Warsaw to implement the Polish version of the "onslaught on the East." However, it turned out that the forces at its disposal, even when supplied by the Entente, were not enough to win. While the Red Army was engaged in battles with the White Army, the Polish offensive was successful, but in a one-on-one war, the Polish army could not resist the Soviet troops. For Soviet Russia, the war with Poland became a war with a foreign invasion, which brought together various political forces in a country split by the Civil War. And when in July 1920 it was created



the impression that the war had almost been won, naturally, the question arose: what next? Where is the guarantee that the war will really end? As a result, the military goals of the final defeat of the enemy and the political calculations for a "world revolution" pushed the Red Army to march on Warsaw and Lvov. True, at that moment the Soviet troops were not a model of military organization, and the military-political leadership overestimated their strength, and the campaign against Warsaw, instead of the Sovietization of Poland, turned into a defeat. Now Polish society has received a clear confirmation of the official propaganda about the "threat from the east." All this, along with the mistakes of the command of the Soviet Western Front, led to the "miracle

on the Vistula". At the same time, the events of 1920 showed that it was impossible to implement both Polish and Soviet plans in full, and the parties had to compromise. Finally, they looked at each other as equals, which reflected the course of peace negotiations and the Treaty of Riga. The territorial issue was resolved between Moscow and Warsaw in the classic way of power compromise. The Soviet-Polish border was determined arbitrarily according to the random configuration of the front line. This new frontier had no other justification, nor could it have. Having received 1/2 of the territory of Belarus and 1/4 of Ukraine, perceived as "wild outskirts" intended for Polonization, Poland became a state in which the Poles made up only 64% of the population. Although the parties renounced mutual territorial claims, the Riga border became an insurmountable barrier between Poland and the USSR. As rightly noted by I.V. Mi-Khutin, "all this created the ground for new conflicts and in the coming decades cast a shadow over Soviet-Polish relations. The situation of mutual distrust, political suspicion, psychological hostility received a tragic resolution in the prologue of the Second World War . It is clear that the national oppression in the eastern provinces of Poland not only did not

contribute to their Polonization, but, on the contrary, formed the anti-Polish self-awareness of the local population. The Belarusian and Ukrainian national movements eventually turned to the search for allies against Poland in the West and East. Organized nationalist groups sought support in Germany, England and France, and the patriotic feelings of the population rushed to the BSSR and the Ukrainian SSR, which naturally became romanticized. All this, of course, largely kept Warsaw from any rapprochement with Moscow. In this version of the development of bilateral relations, there was a hidden threat of expanding Soviet influence in Poland, which was completely unacceptable to the Polish leadership. That is, the Soviet-Polish border of 1921 became the first variant of the "Iron Curtain" in Eastern Europe in the 20th century. From the point of view of the Soviet side, the Riga border was the most convenient frontier for the invasion of the USSR, which

did not have any natural obstacles to the Dnieper. As a result, the "pan" Poland was perceived by the Soviet leadership as a potential enemy No. 1. Therefore, the western border of the USSR was strengthened like no other in the 1920s and 1930s. Warsaw's desire to dominate Eastern Europe was perceived in Moscow as the preparation of a military-political alliance on the western Soviet borders, the implementation of the idea of a "cordon sanitaire" against it. In this opinion, the Kremlin was strengthened by the constant rejection by the Polish side of any Soviet proposals aimed at reducing mutual suspicion. For its part, the Polish leadership was afraid of such concessions to show their weakness and, naturally, demonstrated "strength" both in the Baltic states and in Romania.

All these political and diplomatic games were superimposed and widespread among the participants in the war of 1919-1920. perception of a neighbor as an enemy. It was clearly a matter of mutual fears. The fear of the "lords" before the revolt of the "rabble", before the revolution, its inexorable element, before the new subjugation of the "barbarians from the east", even the alphabet of which betrayed their strangeness. The national self-consciousness of the Poles during the Second Rzeczpospolita was based on these phobias - if Russia, the largest Eurasian power, was defeated, it means that Poland is a potentially great power and it is only necessary to use favorable conditions to consolidate this status. Another equally widespread idea was the conviction that Europe "will not let us perish." All this, taken together, pushed Warsaw to actions that were completely unsupported by the real possibilities of Poland, it was a kind of national self-deception. For the Soviet side, 1920 was no less decisive than for the Polish side. The

Polish invasion, in the face of the apparent fading of the Civil War in Russia, confirmed the well-known truth that for the weak, every neighbor is a dangerous enemy. People of different political views were clearly convinced of the presence of a real external threat, and the outcome of the Soviet-Polish war strengthened the general desire to revive a powerful state in the guise of the USSR. Abstract "capitalist environment"

received its real embodiment in the face of Poland - the "beloved brainchild" of the Entente and the "main support" of the Versailles system in Europe. On both sides, all these phobias and propaganda stereotypes were supported and inculcated in every possible way, and the Polish and Soviet leadership went through the crucible of the war of 1919-1920. Abstracting from this reality, it is generally impossible to understand the general trends in Soviet-Polish relations in the 1920s and 1930s.

It should also be remembered that both countries were in unequal conditions. Poland was an internationally recognized state with powerful allies in the West. The RSFSR, on the contrary, not only was not legally recognized as the leading powers, but was forced to wage a Civil War until the end of 1922, inspired, among other things, by the Entente countries. It is clear that under these conditions, the Polish elite staked on the maximum possible strengthening of Poland at the expense of its neighbors, hoping to consolidate the country's leading role in Eastern Europe. However, during the 1920s there was a certain transformation of the Versailles system. As a result, it turned out that Poland's influence in the international arena and even in Eastern Europe began to gradually decrease. By the mid 1930s, it turned out that Warsaw now had to find a new strategy for achieving great power status, since its western and eastern neighbors had already outgrown the framework of regional powers. All this prompted Poland to use the policy of "balance" in relation to Germany and the USSR. But the growing crisis and the collapse of the Versailles system by the end of 1938 required Poland to clearly define its position.

For the Soviet Union in the 1920s, the main international issues were the regional issues of Eastern Europe, connected primarily with its western neighbors. It was separated from Europe by the countries of the "cordon sanitaire", as in the times of the "eastern barrier" of the 16th-17th centuries. That is, the USSR lost the great-power status of the Russian Empire and became a regional power. The main goal of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe was to maintain military parity with the immediate Western neighbors and prevent the creation of an anti-Soviet military-political bloc there. In response to Poland's desire to blockade with the Baltic countries and Romania, Moscow tried to get closer to Germany and Lithuania. In relations with the major European powers, the USSR could consider diplomatic relations normal only with Germany, while relations with England and France were essentially formal, which was still a significant achievement for Moscow compared to the early 1920s. At the same time, the "Rapallo period" of Soviet-German relations, characterized by significant military-technical

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by the cooperation of the parties, each of whom saw an enemy in Poland, could not help pushing Warsaw to strengthen the alliance with France and rapprochement with the countries of Eastern Europe.

It is clear that under these conditions the Soviet Union was forced to adjust its foreign policy, gradually abandoning the frantic revolutionary slogans and appeals. In relations with Warsaw, Moscow was primarily interested in the implementation of the Riga Treaty in full, which, in turn, required certain concessions from both sides. At the same time, the trade agreement provided for by the Riga Treaty, despite repeated Soviet proposals, was concluded only in February 1939. The cool Soviet-Polish relations were threatened in 1927, when England broke off diplomatic relations with the USSR, and in Warsaw he was killed Soviet plenipotentiary. Since at the same time the Polish side stopped negotiations on a non-aggression pact with the USSR, Moscow feared the outbreak of war. It is clear that the Soviet leadership tried by diplomatic means to reduce the threat of war, for which the USSR acceded to the Briand-Kellogg Treaty and invited Poland and Lithuania to sign a protocol on its early entry into force. However, the negotiations showed that Poland still has significant influence over the Baltic countries and Romania. As a result, Moscow had to agree to the Polish plan for a multilateral protocol. On the one hand, this corresponded to the desire of the Soviet leadership to strengthen the existing status quo in Eastern Europe, but on the other hand, it demonstrated a high degree of solidarity of its Western neighbors. Therefore, fears that this cohesion may also have military overtones persisted.

However, the growing contradictions in Europe at the turn of the 1920s-1930s, led to the fact that France became interested in the Soviet Union. The non-aggression pact between Moscow and Paris pushed Warsaw to a similar agreement with its eastern neighbor. Moreover, German-Polish relations were gradually aggravated, and the negotiations on the "Pact of Four" showed that Germany was on the verge of fully restoring its status as a great European power. In this situation, the Polish leadership decided to use the NSDAP coming to power in Germany to normalize German-Polish relations. For its part, Berlin, interested in breaking the diplomatic blockade,

willingly went to an agreement with Warsaw. In general, the German-Polish declaration of non-aggression completely bypassed the main issue of their relations - the border issue. Nevertheless, the Polish leadership saw in the 1934 agreement the basis of a new policy of "balance" between Germany and the USSR. It was believed that German-Soviet antagonism would allow Poland to play on their contradictions and intensify its great-power aspirations.

In the meantime, a broad discussion of various options for implementing pacifist ideas continued in Europe. Actively participating in the discussion of disarmament issues, the USSR proposed its own definition of aggression, which actually made it impossible. It is clear that the great powers evaded signing this document under various pretexts. Only the small countries of Eastern Europe, the Near and Middle East, fearing aggression from the great powers, supported the Soviet proposal and agreed in July 1933 to sign a convention on the definition of aggression. Thus, Moscow demonstrated a tendency to maintain the established status quo, which, against the backdrop of the revisionist claims of Germany, made it possible to hope for an expansion of Soviet participation in European affairs. At the same time, the Soviet leadership had hopes for an improvement in Soviet-Polish relations, which was seen as a guarantee against a possible German-Polish rapprochement. But all these hopes were crossed out by the German-Polish agreement of 1934 and Warsaw's position on the Eastern Pact. It would seem that Poland should have been interested in international guarantees of its borders, but the Polish leadership, which did not yet see a real threat from its neighbors, tried in every possible way to prevent the strengthening of Soviet influence in Europe, which would automatically reduce the already not very noticeable Polish influence. That is, the return of the USSR to Europe as a great power was completely incompatible with Poland's foreign policy strategy. It is clear that such a position of Warsaw did not improve Soviet-Polish relations, and the fact that the Polish leadership actually agreed with the position of Germany gave rise to suspicions in Moscow that there were some secret German-Polish agreements. Naturally, Poland

reacted negatively to the entry of the USSR into the League of Nations and the conclusion of the Soviet-French and Soviet-Czechoslovak mutual assistance treaties. However, the actions of Germany, which violated the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, did not cause any negative reaction in Warsaw, which also led foreign observers to certain reflections. Moreover, in 1938 Poland was by no means a kind of outside observer of the unfolding events in Europe. Using the situation that arose in connection with the Anschluss of Austria, Warsaw tried to resolve the territorial dispute with Lithuania that had already lasted for 18 years, seeking from it, under the threat of an invasion, the recognition of the annexation of Vilna to Poland. Moscow's position was determined primarily by the desire to prevent the emergence of a new hotbed of conflict on its western borders. Of course, the Soviet position was regarded in Warsaw as interference in other people's affairs. But Soviet-Polish relations found themselves in the most difficult situation during the Czechoslovak crisis. Convinced that England and France would not oppose German expansionist aspirations towards Czechoslovakia, the Polish leadership decided to use the situation to expand its own influence in Eastern Europe and its territory at the expense of its southern neighbor. As if by magic, anti-Czech motives suddenly revived in the Polish press, going back to the events of 1919 connected with the drawing of the Polish-Czechoslovak border. This position of Poland was determined to a large extent by the

anti-Czech complex of a number of influential figures in Warsaw, who perceived Czechoslovakia as "artificially and ugly" created formation of the Treaty of Versailles. Thus, Poland turned out to be a direct opponent of Czechoslovakia and its allied USSR. She not only categorically refused to discuss the issue of allowing the Red Army through her territory to Czechoslovakia, but also demonstrated her readiness to resist such a development of events with arms in hand. It is clear that the situation in the summer-autumn of 1938 did not improve at all

Soviet-Polish relations.

For its part, Moscow in the spring and summer of 1938 tried to achieve equality with the other great powers of Europe. However, it quickly became clear that neither England nor France, not to mention Germany and Italy, were inclined to make such a concession. Both London and Paris relied on a policy of "appeasement", which, in their opinion, was to direct the expansionist aspirations of Germany in an easterly direction and become the basis for the consolidation of Europe. The Soviet leadership quite rightly perceived these aspirations of Britain and France as the most serious threat to their interests. Therefore, the Soviet leadership constantly demonstrated its readiness to participate in the solution of the Czechoslovak question and to fulfill its allied duty. However, England

and France, of course, did not respond to these Soviet proposals, since their implementation would have made an agreement with Germany impossible. Naturally, under these conditions, Poland was perceived in the Kremlin as a direct accomplice of Germany, which only confirmed the thesis that Warsaw was a potential enemy No. 1. Therefore, Moscow was interested in splitting the emerging Germanopol tandem.

Meanwhile, already in October 1938, Warsaw, faced with the revisionist proposals of Berlin on the issue of the German-Polish border, decided to normalize Soviet-Polish relations, which had clearly deteriorated in August-September 1938. Thus, in the autumn of 1938, Poland

again resorted to politics "equilibrium" in relation to Germany and the USSR. As a result, unexpectedly for Berlin, Warsaw declined to accept his proposals and demonstrated normal relations with Moscow.

However, the German occupation of the Czech Republic and the Klaipeda

region and the declaration of "independence" of Slovakia marked the beginning of the pre-war political crisis and showed Poland that its strategic position had deteriorated.

By 1939, it was quite obvious that Poland was not perceived by anyone as a great power, but the Polish leadership, blinded by its own great power aspirations, stubbornly refused to admit the obvious. The Polish "balance" between Germany and the USSR no longer corresponded to the current situation. Objectively, Poland faced a choice: an alliance with Germany or with the USSR. But the Polish leadership, overestimating its own and underestimating the German capabilities, decided to continue the policy of balance, this time on a European scale, relying on England and France. Neither the events of 1938, in which Poland itself took an active part, nor the real steps taken by London and Paris in 1939 in relation to Germany and the USSR, had any effect on the assessment of the prospects for international relations formulated in Warsaw. It is clear that the Soviet proposals for rapprochement were rejected with arrogance. After all, behind them was seen only the desire of Moscow to gain access to the eastern provinces of Poland and revise the decisions of 1921. The attitude of the Polish leadership towards the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations can hardly be described otherwise than as unfriendly. This time, Warsaw's great-power complex was pushed to its maximum —no agreement on Poland behind its back, but rejection of any agreement with Moscow. For the Soviet Union, the situation was not very favorable. On the one

hand, both Britain and France and Germany showed a desire for an agreement with it, but, on the other hand, the danger of a new Anglo-French-German agreement following the example of 1938 was by no means excluded. This was confirmed by the position of Poland, which, being an ally of England and France, did not want rapprochement with Moscow. Therefore, it is difficult to agree with the opinion of S.Z. A case that accuses the Soviet leadership of "not even indirectly intending to alleviate the situation of its neighbor in the face of impending German aggression, although the preservation of the independence and territorial integrity of Poland objectively met the national-state interests of the Soviet Union"<sup>960</sup>. Especially when you consider that at that moment the possibility of a German-Polish compromise was not at all excluded, which would have made Poland a junior partner of Germany. We should also not forget that England and France also sought to find a compromise with Germany at the expense of Poland as well. But now they try not to remember such "little things". Speaking seriously, the Soviet leadership was well aware that only the growing crisis in Europe would allow Moscow to become an equal partner of that grouping of great European powers that would renounce anti-Soviet actions and be ready to take into account Soviet interests. Moreover, Moscow has repeatedly offered Warsaw rapprochement, which, by the way, would help preserve "the independence and territorial integrity of Poland." During the political crisis of 1939, two military-political blocs emerged in Europe: Anglo-French and German-Italian, each of which was interested in an agreement with the USSR. For its part, Moscow got the

opportunity to choose with whom and on what terms to negotiate, and used it to the maximum, balancing between these military-political blocs. International relations in the spring-summer of 1939 in Europe were a tangled tangle of diplomatic activities of the great powers, each of which sought to achieve its own goals. Events developed in parallel in several directions: there were secret and overt Anglo-French-Soviet, Anglo-German and Soviet-German negotiations, an Anglo-French-Polish and German-Italian coalition was taking shape. Moscow in its calculations proceeded from the fact that the outbreak of war in Europe - both with the participation of the USSR in the Anglo-French bloc, and while maintaining its neutrality - opened up new prospects for strengthening Soviet influence on the continent. alliance with England and

France would make Moscow an equal partner with all the ensuing consequences, and the Soviet Union's preservation of neutrality in the face of the weakening of both belligerents would allow it to take the position of a kind of arbiter on which the outcome of the war depends. Based on such calculations, the Soviet foreign policy course was determined. The Anglo-French-Soviet

negotiations showed that Britain and France were not ready for equal partnership with the USSR. Under these conditions, Germany's proposals turned out to be more attractive, and on August 23, 1939, a Soviet-German non-aggression pact was signed in Moscow, which became a significant success for Soviet diplomacy. The USSR managed to stay out of the European war, while gaining a certain free hand in Eastern Europe, more room for maneuver between the warring factions in their own interests, and at the same time shifting the blame for the breakdown of the Anglo-French Soviet negotiations on London and Paris. In 1939, Europe was split into three military-political camps: Anglo-French, German-Italian and Soviet, each of which sought to achieve its own goals, which could not but lead to war. Under these conditions, the non-aggression pact ensured not only the interests of the Soviet Union, but also the rear of Germany, facilitating her war in Europe.

Here, of course, the question arises of the compatibility of the Soviet-German and Soviet-Polish non-aggression pacts. So, S.Z. Sluch believes that, "by making an agreement with the Third Reich, the Soviet leadership immediately violated Article 3 of the non-aggression pact between the USSR and Poland ... According to this article, the USSR and Poland pledged "not to take part in any agreements, from an aggressive point of view, clearly hostile to the other side." The Soviet-German pact was primarily directed against Poland, before the attack on which Germany had only a few days left, represented, in its devoted publicity part, de jure an agreement on the unlimited neutrality of each of the parties in relation to the actions of the other side, i.e., provided the aggressor with full freedom of action. As for the secret protocol... it fixed the agreement between the two aggressive states on the territorial and political reorganization and division of spheres of interest in Eastern Europe, of which Poland was to become the first victim.<sup>961</sup>

Well, let's try to determine how true this opinion is. First, unlike a union treaty, a non-aggression agreement cannot be directed against anyone. Against whom, for example, was the Soviet-German neutrality treaty of 1926<sup>962</sup> or the German-Polish non-aggression treaty of 1934<sup>963</sup>, which had the character of unlimited neutrality, directed? For some reason, the Anglo-German and Franco-German declarations of September 30 and December 6, 1938, which had the same character of unlimited neutrality, now do not cause any reproaches of violating the interests of third countries. Moreover, Germany had swallowed up Austria and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia before that. After all, in fact, Berlin was given "complete freedom of action" in Eastern Europe, that is, against Poland too. However, for some reason, similar actions of the USSR are condemned in every possible way, and England and France, apparently, have some kind of exceptional indulgence that justifies any of their actions in advance. In our opinion, here we are dealing with a shameless double standard in assessing similar actions of different countries on the world stage. Secondly, the question of the

violation by the Soviet side of the Soviet-Polish treaty is not so simple. In the Soviet-German agreement there is not a word about any hostile actions against Poland, that is, formally the Soviet-German agreement was quite compatible with the Soviet-Polish agreement, since the letter of the agreement was not violated. Of course, under the real conditions of 1939, the Soviet-German pact contradicted the spirit of the Soviet-Polish agreement. But speaking frankly, the spirit of this or that agreement is a rather conditional thing and is perceived rather under the influence of subjective factors. Be that as it may, officially Warsaw at that moment did not see in the actions of Moscow a violation of the existing treaty. As for the secret protocol to the Soviet-German pact, this document is

also rather amorphous. It does not record any anti-Polish agreements of the parties. Recall this text: ***"In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the regions that are part of the Polish state, the border of the spheres of interests of Germany and the USSR will approximately run along the line of the Narewa, Vistula and Sana rivers. The question whether it is desirable in mutual interests to preserve the independence of the Polish state and what the boundaries of this state will be, can be finally clarified only in the course of further political development.*** In any case, both governments ***will resolve this issue in the manner of friendly mutual agreement.***" <sup>964</sup> reorganization". In any case, no real territorial changes or occupation of the "spheres of interest" of the Soviet

The German treaty did not provide for. This is its<sup>965</sup> fundamental difference from the Munich Agreement, which directly transferred to Germany the border regions of Czechoslovakia.

Unfortunately, now, knowing further events, some researchers are inclined to believe that Hitler and Stalin already then, on the night of August 24, knew in advance what exactly would happen in the next 38 days. Naturally, this was not the case in reality. In general, the situation at the end of August 1939 was so confusing that politicians and diplomats of all countries, including the Soviet Union, tried to sign the most vague agreements, which, depending on the situation, could be interpreted in any way. Moreover, on August 24, no one knew whether a German-Polish war would arise at all, or if some kind of compromise would be reached, as was the case in 1938. In this situation, the term "territorial and political reorganization" of Poland could also be interpreted as a variant of the new Munich, that is, would allow Moscow to declare its interests at a possible international conference. And the concept of "sphere of interest" in general could be interpreted in any way. In any case, the Soviet-German pact was an agreement designed for any situation.

Of course, Moscow was interested in defending its own interests, including at the expense of the interests of others, but this, be that as it may, is an axiom of the foreign policy strategy of any state. Why is it that only the Soviet Union is blamed for such actions? In addition, we should not forget that it was the diplomatic games of England and France that pushed Germany to war with Poland. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union is now most unexpectedly to blame for this. By the way, no one prevented Warsaw from reaching an agreement with Moscow or Berlin, and then there would be no Soviet-German agreement. But in the real situation of the second half of the 1930s, the option of a Soviet-Polish agreement was almost completely excluded. The outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 justified the Kremlin's worst fears. It turned out that England and

France were not ready for a real clash with Germany, and instead of a quick defeat of Germany, with the actual non-intervention of the Western allies, Poland was defeated. The policy of "appeasement" brought its inevitable results, demonstrating the inability of London and Paris to defend their own interests. One can explain the position of England and France in different ways, but there is no getting away from the fact that the Allies left Poland to its fate. Moreover, as is now known, this position of London and Paris was not some kind of improvisation that arose under the influence of events. No, this was the strategic line of the Anglo-French allies, formulated in advance and steadily carried out, determined by the policy of "appeasement" of Germany. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the position of researchers who believe that an alliance with England and France was in the interests of the USSR, which in this case would have to go to war with Germany on the territory of Poland, with the allies in the west completely inactive<sup>966</sup>.

Having achieved its interests in Eastern Europe thanks to the non-aggression pact, the Soviet Union closely followed the developments in Europe, preparing to use them to its advantage. The passive position of England and France, which had the opportunity to defeat Germany already in September 1939, allowed the Soviet leadership to intensify its policy towards Poland, which during most of the interwar period was considered by Moscow as enemy No. 1<sup>967</sup>. The German leadership sought to involve the USSR in the war with Poland in order to demonstrate the German-Soviet "alliance", but Moscow successfully avoided this danger. The basis of Soviet propaganda with an explanation of the reasons for intervention in the German-Polish war was the idea of ensuring the state interests of the USSR and protecting the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples in the conditions of the collapse of Poland. The Soviet leadership managed to combine this essentially anti-German propaganda and

cooperation with Germany in the division of Poland.

As a result, it was possible to achieve that London and Paris considered the actions of the USSR as a lesser evil compared to the German occupation of the entire Polish territory. This forced confession was made on October 1, 1939, in a radio speech by W. Churchill, who stated in particular that "to protect Russia from the Nazi threat, it was clearly necessary that the Russian armies stand on this line. In any case, this line exists, and, consequently, the Eastern Front has been created, which Nazi Germany will not dare to attack". This allusion to the cowardice of Berlin opened a new chapter in the British policy of provoking a German-Soviet war. The actions of the USSR against Poland in September 1939 are assessed in modern domestic

historiography inconsistently. Almost all authors condemn the then statements of the Soviet leadership about the collapse of Poland and the cessation of its existence, but at the same time, some of them operate

precisely this argumentation. A.S. Orlov believes that since the USSR sent in troops at a time when the Polish government lost control of the straits, and the emigrant government had not yet been created, then international law was respected<sup>970</sup>. From these considerations it is not clear why international law does not apply at the time of a change of government, and also what does the question of the ability of the government to govern the country have to do with this problem? Some authors associate the moment of the entry of Soviet troops into Poland with the signing of the Soviet-Japanese agreement on the Naran cease-fire. Khalkhin-Gol, which, in their opinion, provided the rear of the USSR in the East

Some authors believe that the entry of the Red Army into Poland was predetermined by an agreement with Germany on the division of spheres of interest in Eastern Europe<sup>972</sup>. According to others, the successful actions of the Wehrmacht in Poland and its rapid defeat came as a surprise to the Soviet leadership, which was forced to take retaliatory measures<sup>973</sup>. The threat to the Soviet borders increased, there were fears that Germany would not comply with the pact, and therefore the USSR had to enter. True, these authors do not explain why, in this case, the German leadership so insistently invited the USSR to occupy Eastern Poland. According to M.I. Semiryaga, delaying the entry of the Red Army into Poland was due to the need for psychological preparation of the population, fears of a clash with England and France, the need to calm world public opinion and the expectation of the fall of Warsaw. In the Soviet press, the author notes, an anti-Polish campaign was launched, Polish diplomats in the USSR became the object of close observation by the NKVD and on September 17 they were repressed. According to some authors, September 17

1939 The Soviet Union violated all its treaties with Poland and committed aggression against it<sup>975</sup>. Pointing to the military cooperation between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army in Poland, a number of authors conclude that on September 17, 1939, the Soviet Union actually entered the Second World War on the side of Germany<sup>976</sup>.

In the latest Russian historiography, the Soviet-German treaty of September 28, 1939, as a rule, is assessed sharply critically. According to a number of authors, since the treaty was concluded with a belligerent country, the USSR moved away from neutrality and embarked on the path of cooperation with Germany<sup>977</sup>. Others point out that, having concluded a non-aggression pact on the eve of the German-Polish war, the USSR supported the aggressive aspirations of Germany and was not at all neutral, but assisted Germany, helping it to defeat Poland<sup>978</sup>. In the literature, the Soviet leadership is condemned for violating international law, expressed in the establishment of the Soviet-German border in Poland without its consent, the planning of joint anti-Polish actions and an agreement on the forced resettlement of the population of Poland<sup>979</sup>. As positive consequences of the treaty, many authors name the establishment of the border along the "Curzon Line", the receipt by the USSR of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, freedom of hands in the Baltic states and the creation of a barrier to German expansion in Eastern Europe<sup>980</sup>. Nevertheless, the prevailing opinion in historiography is that the treaty of 28 September 1939 is a political mistake. Moreover, A.D. Bogaturov believes that now "the union between Moscow and Berlin has been formalized by a full-scale interstate treaty"<sup>981</sup>. M.I. Semiryaga also believes that the USSR actually entered into a military-political alliance with Germany, and according to A.M. Nekrich, Soviet-German relations from

September 1939 to November 1940 were "as it were, an unfinished military-political alliance"<sup>982</sup>. First of all, it should be noted that there was no question of any military-political alliance - neither "actual" nor "incomplete". Not to mention the fact that neither the non-aggression pact nor the treaty of 28 September contained a single word about any Soviet-German alliance<sup>983</sup>. Neither Moscow nor Berlin

never considered their relationship in this vein, although they made such propaganda statements that could be interpreted as a certain tendency for further rapprochement between them. However, things did not go further than this. In addition, the assertion that the Red Army helped the Wehrmacht to defeat Poland is not true. Actually, this thesis is again based on the then Soviet propaganda statements. So, Molotov, summing up the results of the Polish campaign, declared at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on October 31, 1939, that "the ruling circles of Poland were not a little proud of the "strength" of their state and the "power" of their army. However, a short blow against Poland, first by the German army and then by the Red Army, turned out to be enough to leave nothing of this ugly offspring of the Treaty of Versailles, which lived off the oppression of non-Polish nationalities."

Now that the events of September 1939 have been sufficiently well studied, it should be unequivocally stated that Germany actually did not receive any help from the USSR in Poland<sup>985</sup>, but it was not needed. By September 17, the Wehrmacht not only defeated the main groupings of the Polish Army, but also surrounded almost all combat-ready units. True, some of the few detachments were not blocked or located east of the river. Western Bug, but they could not change the situation at the front. Data tables 33 also confirm that the participation of the Red Army in the events in Poland was minimal. Of course, if the Red Army had not entered Poland, the Germans would have needed some time to occupy its eastern voivodships, but no real stable front could arise there.

**Table 33 Losses of the parties in September 1939<sup>986</sup>**

Losses	Germany	Poland		USSR
		Against Germany	Against the USSR	
Killed	10 572	66 300	3 500	1 173
Missing 3,409 Wounded	30 322 133 700		20 000	302
Captivity	-	420 000	457 700 —	2002
Gone abroad - Guns and		84 600		-
mortars 248 Tanks 229		.2218	900	6
		?	?	17
Aircraft	564	391	300	6
motor vehicles	4 588		?	36

? Actually, this was clearly manifested during the Polish campaign of the Red Army, when thousands of armed detachments surrendered to small groups of Soviet soldiers. Polish. What kind of long-term resistance in such conditions can we talk about? General W. Anders wrote in his memoirs that the Red Army invaded Poland "just at the moment when the onslaught of the Germans began to weaken when German communications stretched for hundreds of kilometers began to break, when we could still resist for a while and give the allies the opportunity to strike at open western borders of Germany. Soviet Russia unilaterally broke the treaty with Poland on non-aggression in the most difficult moment for Poland and, like a jackal, pounced from the back on the expiring the blood of the Polish army"<sup>987</sup>. I wonder if the general himself believed in this when he, with the remnants of his cavalry brigades, following the order of the commander-in-chief, retreated from the lower reaches of the Nareva to the upper reaches of the Dniester.

Or all these maxims were required only in the 1960s, when it became possible to settle scores with the USSR at least on the pages of memoirs? Particularly persuasive are statements about the intentions of Poland's Western allies, who did not lift a finger to help her even then, when the Polish Army was still a significant force. What can we say about the middle of September, when did the Polish front collapse? Of course, it is not to be denied that Soviet intervention became possible only under certain conditions, and certain emotional characteristics are a matter of taste. Especially if we recall the actions against Czechoslovakia in October 1938 of Poland itself, which, according to such the same figurative definition of one German diplomat, "the hyena of the battlefield"<sup>988</sup>. Well, as it shows centuries-old practice, "in one's own eye it is imperceptible and a log."

No matter how one evaluates the actions of the Soviet Union in relation to Poland, it is clear that Moscow turned out to be before choosing. Formally, she had to not react in any way to what was happening with her western event boundaries. It is clear that this could not be. Therefore, the Soviet leadership was faced with the question: what to do? Knowing about the defeat of the Polish Army by the Wehrmacht and that the Anglo-French allies Poland will not interfere in the German-Polish war, the Soviet leadership decided on active actions. It was under these conditions that the amorphous Soviet-German agreement on spheres came in handy interests. In addition, Germany's clear interest in involving the USSR in the German-Polish war allowed me to take full advantage of the moment. But here Moscow faced the difficult question of justification for their own actions. Deviating from Berlin's proposed demonstration "joint" actions against Poland, the Soviet leadership announced the collapse of the Polish state, which led to the termination of agreements with it.

Undoubtedly, the form of denunciation by the Soviet Union of treaties with Poland violated the procedure in their texts. Therefore, from a legal point of view, this was a direct violation of Soviet party to the obligations. Moreover, in the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact there was



It is stipulated that "any act of violence that violates the integrity and inviolability of the territory or the political independence of the other contracting party will be recognized as an action contrary to obligations, even if these actions were carried out without a declaration of war and avoiding all its possible consequences"<sup>989</sup>. But, as it usually happens, life is much more diverse than strict legal formulas, and interstate agreements are valid only as long as it is beneficial. In this case, the interests of the Soviet Union clearly required intervention in the events taking place in Poland.

Were these actions of the USSR aggression? According to the 1933 convention on the definition of aggression, proposed precisely by the Soviet side, the aggressor was the one who made "a declaration of war on another state; the invasion of its armed forces, even without a declaration of war, on the territory of another state; an attack by its land, sea or air forces, even without a declaration of war, on the territory, ships or aircraft of another state; sea blockade of coasts or ports of another state; support given to armed bands which, having been formed on its territory, would invade the territory of another state, or the refusal, despite the demand of the invaded state, to take, in its own territory, all measures in its power to deprive said bands of all assistance, or patronage." Moreover, the convention specifically stipulated that "no consideration of a political, military, economic or other order can justify aggression" (including the internal system and its shortcomings; unrest caused by strikes, revolutions, counter-revolutions or civil war; violation of the interests of another state; rupture of diplomatic and economic relations; economic or financial blockade; disputes, including territorial and border incidents). That is, from a legal point of view, Moscow's actions should be qualified precisely as aggression. At the same time, we should not forget that, as already mentioned above, Western

Ukraine and Western Belarus became part of Poland as a result of Polish aggression against its eastern neighbors. Thus, the events of September 1939 meant, among other things, the Soviet revenge for losing the war of 1919-1920. and the return of territories lost as a result of external aggression. In fact, these considerations have already been expressed in the literature. So, A.D. Markov points out that "Western Ukrainian and Western Belarusian lands ... in the X-XI centuries. were part of Kievan Rus. Moreover, already in 981, Prince Vladimir I had to fight the Poles for the cities of Przemyśl, Cherven, and others. True, in our opinion, such a thesis cannot serve as an argument, since at the end of the 10th century the struggle was going on within one "Slavic" civilization between two kindred peoples (that is, similar to the situation with the division of Charlemagne's empire between the French and Germans). Much has changed since then, as already noted, new civilizations have formed in Eastern Europe. Poland became part of the "Western" civilization, and the territory to the east of the Western Bug River gravitated towards the "Russian" civilization. At the same time, one cannot but agree with the opinion of V.V. Kozhinov that in 1939 not only the political border was restored, which was considered legal by the great powers back in 1919, but also the geopolitical border between the "Western" and "Russian" civilizations<sup>992</sup>. That is, what happened again happened at the end of the 18th century.

Oddly enough, the participants in the events, of course, not counting the Poles, took this generally calmly. As A. Taylor rightly noted, during discussions in London about a possible reaction to the Soviet invasion of Poland, "the Foreign Office pointed out that the British government, when outlining the Curzon line in 1920, considered that territory that was now occupied by the Soviets by right belonged to the Russians. troops". But internal discussions are one thing, and the official position of the government is another. In any case, as Taylor writes not without sarcasm, "later on there was no opportunity to recognize the legitimacy of the offensive undertaken by Soviet Russia"<sup>993</sup>. The same point of view is shared by A. Bullock, who believes that "the fourth partition of Poland allowed Russia to return the former Russian territories annexed by the Poles in 1920"<sup>994</sup>. In this sense, it is impossible not to join the opinion of N.M. Karamzin: "Let foreigners condemn the division of Poland: we have

taken our own"<sup>995</sup>. From this position, by the way, the tired allegations about the "partition of Poland" between Germany and the USSR do not look convincing. Of course, from a legal point of view, there was a division of the territory of the Polish state, but the Soviet Union did not receive practically a single territory where the Poles would constitute an overwhelming majority (perhaps only the Białystok region was an exception). Be that as it may, the transfer of the Soviet border to Pissa, Narev, Bug and Sa

restored historical justice, but also improved the strategic position of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, opened up new prospects for it on the way to securing the status of a great power. However, the question immediately arises: did the USSR enter the

Second World War? The answer to it depends on the answer to the question, what kind of events do we consider the Second World War? If the Second World War means a war between England, France, Poland on the one hand and Germany on the other, then the Soviet Union did not enter this war, confirming its neutrality with respect to London, Paris and Berlin. Moreover, it should be remembered that Germany, England, France and Poland, for one reason or another, actually recognized the status of a "non-participating in the war" state for the Soviet Union. Therefore, the actions of the Red Army in Poland can be considered, in accordance with modern terminology, as a peacekeeping operation. But <sup>996</sup>. if we consider the Second World War as a process of changing the systems of international relations, which includes a set of wars of the great powers between themselves and other countries for expanding their influence and revising the borders established in 1919-1922, then in this case the Soviet Union, of course, entered the Second World War, but not on the side of Germany, as some researchers believe, but as a third force acting in its own interests. This was especially clearly manifested during the Soviet-German negotiations on September 27-28, 1939. The Soviet leadership managed to fully secure its interests in the Baltic states and, taking into account the mood in the West, get rid of the fate of the vast majority of

the Polish people transferred to the sphere of German interests. The repressive German policy towards the Poles in the occupied territories stimulated the anti-German movement, which was a potential ally of the USSR in the event of a war with Germany. It is difficult to disagree with the opinion of W. Shearer, who believes that "Hitler unleashed a war against Poland and won it, but Stalin turned out to be much more profitable, whose troops hardly fired even a single shot. The Soviet Union received almost half of Poland and took on the Baltic states. This, as never before, alienated Germany from her main long-term goals: from Ukrainian wheat and Romanian oil, which she urgently needed to survive under the British blockade. Even the Polish oil-bearing regions of Boryslav and Drohobych, which were claimed by Hitler, Stalin bargained with him, generously promising to sell the Germans the equivalent of the annual oil production in these regions. On the wave of critical condemnation of Soviet foreign policy, judgments have now appeared regarding the comparison of Soviet and German occupation policies. So, S.Z. Sluch believes that "the scale of casualties, human suffering and deprivation, as well as material damage caused by the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland, has yet to be assessed on the basis of documents, but it is obvious that they were quite comparable, and perhaps even exceeded what fell in the same period on the population

of the German-occupied territory of Poland"<sup>998</sup>. It is curious that in one phrase **the lack of study** of this problem and **the confidence** that the actions of the Soviet Union were "worse" than those of Germany are stated. Well, let's try to evaluate this "obviousness". As you know, the territory of the Second Polish Republic was in October 1939 divided between the USSR, Germany, Lithuania and Slovakia. The main territory inhabited by Poles came under the rule of Germany, which annexed the western Polish voivodeships (about 95,000 sq. km), and created a Polish general governorate (about 97,000 sq. km) in the rest of the territory (about 97,000 sq. km) <sup>999</sup>. Since the policy of Lithuania, which received from the hands of the USSR the Vilna region (6,909 sq. km) <sup>1000</sup>, and Slovakia, which annexed 600 sq. km. <sup>1001</sup> of the annexed territories, as far as we know, has not been studied at all, let us turn to the actions of Germany in the territories annexed to the Reich.

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Even during the German-Polish war and immediately after it, the German special services and self-defense groups of the local German population carried out actions of mass executions of the Polish population. Of course, there are no comprehensive data on these punitive actions, but only in the new imperial districts (Gau) Danzig-West Prussia and Wartheland in September-December 1939, about 30.5 thousand people died. It should be emphasized that the victims of these punitive measures were not military personnel, but civilians. All Polish legislation was abolished, and the new legal regulations of the German authorities were based on the ideas of racial segregation and discrimination against Poles. They had to bow to the Germans, make way for them, take off their hats in front of them. Poles were forbidden to use public transport outside the city limits, and bikes only to travel to or from work. Poles were not even allowed to sit on benches in the streets and parks. That is, the European colonial practice was used by Germany in relation to the Polish population. For the Poles

a special curfew was introduced, marriage bans were introduced for men under 25-28 years old and for women under 22-25 years old, about 750 thousand people were evicted from their apartments, and the rest of the Poles lived under the constant threat of eviction. The seizure of property from the Poles and its transfer to the Germans began, the export of agricultural products to the Reich led to a sharp decline in the living standards of the Polish population. The general goal of the German authorities was to clear the territory of the Poles. In

order to split the Poles, the German authorities introduced several legal categories for them, into which the local population was divided in accordance with the "purity of blood". The Polish intelligentsia (including teachers), who were forbidden to engage in professional activities, were especially persecuted. In November 1939 alone, 120 teachers were shot. Polish schools were closed, and the rest were Germanized, for which the appointment of Germans as teachers was widely used. Higher and secondary educational institutions were closed, the publication of the press and books in Polish was completely stopped, performances of Polish artists were banned. For a visit by a Pole to a German theater, he was threatened with prison. From December 1939, the deportation of the Polish population to the General Government began. This month alone, 138,466 Poles were deported, and German settlers from the Baltics (61,934 people) settled in their place. In 1940, 229,219 Poles were resettled, and 270,950 German settlers from Western Ukraine, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were accepted into this territory. In total, by the middle of 1941, the number of deportees exceeded 400 thousand people.

Thus, German actions in the annexed Polish territories, as well as in the general government, were completely determined by the colonial practice of "unrestricted domination" of the Germans and the racial theories of the NSDAP<sup>1002</sup>. In fact, it was not at all exceptional. In general, racism is one of the ideological foundations of the "Western" civilization, and the German leadership only turned these ideas into European society. It is clear that such a practice of the occupying authorities could not give rise to anything but hatred on the part of the Polish population. One can imagine the intensity of this hatred, if even in the more "liberal" General Government, as noted in the report of March 20, 1941, the head of the Warsaw commandant's office, Colonel von Unruh, the following sentiments were widespread: "Even more than before, there are talks about the upcoming war with Russia. But if before no one wanted victory for the Russians, now the mood has changed to the point where they prefer Russian domination to constant German bullying, especially since the Russians, as it has become known, have recently been treating the Poles especially well. So, for example, in honor of the Polish national poet Mickiewicz - for the Polish people he is like Schiller - whose monument was removed in Krakow, the Soviet government ordered 1003 to hold a memorable decade.

As for the actions of the Soviet leadership in the territories of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, it should first of all be noted that there were no nationalist, let alone racist, grounds for the policy of the new authorities. True, the Soviet authorities had to deal with the legacy of Polish nationalism in these territories. So, already on September 21, 1939, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Commander of the 1st Rank G.I. Kulik, reporting to Moscow on the course of the operation of the Ukrainian Front, noted that "due to the great national oppression of Ukrainians by the Poles, the latter's patience is overflowing and, in some cases, there is a fight between Ukrainians and Poles, up to the threat to cut out the Poles. An urgent appeal from the government to the population is needed, as this can turn into a big political factor"<sup>1004</sup>. The same was reported to Moscow on September 22 by the head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army, army commissar of the 1st rank J.I.3. Mehlis: "The enmity between Ukrainians and Poles is intensifying, now the Ukrainians have become more active and are terrorizing Polish peasants in a number of places. There were cases of mutual arson of villages, murders and robberies. Instructions have been given to widely expand work against national enmity between the working Ukrainians and Poles, directing united forces against the landlords.

Accordingly, already on September 23, the Political Directorate of the Ukrainian Front issued a directive in which, in particular, it was ordered "to explain to the population our national policy. At the same time, take into account that the Ukrainian people were under the national oppression of the pan-landlord and bourgeois authorities, that the Polish government pursued a policy of polonization of Ukrainians and inciting Poles against them. Now this ethnic strife is taking the form of mutual murders, arson and robberies in some places. This only plays into the hands of the enemies of the Ukrainian and Polish workers. Working Ukrainians and Poles must be friends, not enemies, and unite for a joint struggle against a common enemy - the landowner, oppressor and exploiter. It must be declared that the Red Army will not tolerate and will not

<sup>1006</sup>

will allow national strife among the working people.

On September 30, the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front, in its Directive No. 071, indicated that it should, "widely explaining to the population the national policy of the Soviet government, call on the working masses of the city and countryside of Western Ukraine to get rid of national enmity. Call on the population to stop at the root any intention to sow national enmity between working Poles and Ukrainians. The hatred of the working masses must be directed against their common sworn enemy, against the landlords, against the exploiters. It must be ensured that every worker understands that national enmity is kindled by enemies in order to split the unity of the working people's front. All persons seen in the deliberate incitement of national enmity between Poles and Ukrainians should be considered as enemies of the working people and harsh measures of repression should be applied to them .

By the way, the form of annexation of territories to Germany and the USSR was completely different. If Hitler, by his decree of October 8, 1939, simply annexed these territories, declaring them part of Germany, then the Soviet leadership organized elections, during the preparation of which no one concealed the goal of joining the USSR. According to K.M. Simonov, who traveled around Western Belarus on the eve of the elections, he "saw with his own eyes a people really liberated from domination they hated ... the Belarusian population - and it was a huge majority - was glad to see us, they wanted it" 1008 . Of course, one can evaluate the procedure for these elections in different ways, but the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population supported this program speaks precisely of the reunification of these territories with the Soviet Union. That is, in this case, it is difficult to define these events by the term "annexation", which, according to the Decree on Peace, was considered "any accession to a large or strong state of a small or weak nationality without precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and desire of this nationality" 1009 . True, in terms of international relations, Moscow managed to achieve recognition of this territory as part of the USSR only in 1945. The national composition of the deputies of the People's Assembly is equally eloquent: in Western Ukraine, 92.4% of them were Ukrainians, 4.1% Jews, 3% Poles , 0.4% Russians, and in Western Belarus - 67.1% Belarusians, 13.7% Poles, 7.8% Jews, 5.7% Ukrainians, 4.6% Russians and 1.1% people of other nationalities 1010 . This once again confirms the absence of any national discrimination. There was no discrimination against Poles in the field of education either. Although private schools were closed, in state schools and even in some universities, teaching was conducted in Polish. Polish cultural institutions continued to operate, and Polish newspapers, magazines and books were published. In 1940, the 85th anniversary of the death of A. Mickiewicz was widely celebrated.

Above were materials on the relationship between the Red Army and the civilian population. One more example can be given here. In the village of Grigorovo, the commissar of the 148th cavalry regiment Oleinikov, suspecting 12 Poles and 4 Ukrainian peasants of firing at our troops, suggested that they be shot. For this , he was removed from his post, and a special department began investigating this case and the behavior of the commissar. to the USSR, there were no excesses. Unfortunately, this could not have happened, but much more important, in our opinion, is that the Soviet leadership did not incite nationalism, but pursued it in every possible way. Therefore, the assertions that are now encountered that the repressions of the new government in these territories were directed exclusively against the Poles, do not correspond to reality. Of course, in the first months of Soviet power, it was the Polish population that experienced certain restrictions, which, in contrast to their former position as "noble lords", was perceived by them very subjectively. In addition, the transformation of the state apparatus and various administrative structures also affected the Poles in the first place.

It would seem that the fact that out of 19,832 people arrested in September-December 1939 by the NKVD in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, 10,557 (54.5%) were Poles, confirms the opinion about the anti-Polish orientation of the arrests. However, if we turn to the crimes charged to these people, we will see that 4,793 were arrested for illegally crossing the border, 2,068 for participating in counter-revolutionary groups and organizations, 1,672 for counter-revolutionary agitation, 326 for riots and banditry, 143 - for terror, sabotage, wrecking, 1104 - for espionage. But most of all, they were arrested for "miscellaneous" crimes - 9,184 people arrested had nothing to do with political repression at all. If we take into <sup>1012</sup>. That is 47.7% account that the illegal crossing of the border was mainly due to the unsettled border regime and a significant wave of refugees in connection with the events of the German-Polish war, then the number of "non-political" arrests will be 72.1%. That is, about any "anti-Polish" policy of the Soviet authorities

there was no talk. Moreover, in the future, the proportion of Poles among those arrested was constantly decreasing, approximately corresponding to the proportion of the Polish population in these territories.

The same applies to the deportation of the population from Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. As it is now established, only in 1939-1940, 292,513 people were resettled from these territories deep into the USSR (139,299 settlers and foresters, 60,351 family members of captured officers and 92,863 refugees)<sup>1013</sup>. Perhaps only the deportation of the siegemen (79.6% of them Poles) can be regarded as an anti-Polish action, and even then social motives clearly prevailed here, as well as the hatred that they managed to engender among the local population. That is, to a certain extent, it was a form of mitigation by the Soviet leadership of the sharpness of national hatred in the new territories. Of course, the measure is barbaric, but would it be better to allow a national "showdown" among the local population? Not to mention the fact that eviction is not an execution. Of course, this was little consolation for those deported from their native places, but modern researchers could evaluate these events more objectively.

In addition, it should be remembered that on November 13, 1939, the Polish government in exile created an underground organization called the Union of Armed Struggle (SVB), which was engaged in intelligence, organization of sabotage, sabotage and terrorist acts on the territory of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. So, from October 1939 to August 1940, 93 terrorist attacks and assassination attempts were committed in Western Belarus, in which 54 Soviet party workers were killed and 39 were injured. On the territory of Western Ukraine, only from May to November 1940, 96 terrorist attacks were committed.

It is clear that the NKVD began to take countermeasures, and in 1939 - the first quarter of 1941 in Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and Lithuania, 568 underground organizations were identified and 16,758 people were arrested. During these operations, 44 machine guns, 1 mortar, 1,826 rifles, 1,009 revolvers, 675 grenades, 101,176 rounds of ammunition and edged weapons were seized. As a result of all these measures by the Soviet authorities, the activities of the SVB on Soviet territory were practically paralyzed by the spring of 1941<sup>1014</sup>. Moscow was

also alarmed by public statements such as

radio speech by the head of the Polish government in exile

V. Sikorsky on March 1, 1940 that "we are at war with the Soviets, as well as with Germany"<sup>1015</sup>. In connection with the assessments

of Soviet policy in the annexed territories, it is worth referring to the materials of the report of the commander of the SVB Colonel "Grot" - S. Rovetsky: "The Soviets have a lot of help from the local element (Ukrainians, Belarusians, the Jewish poor), there are many supporters among the youth who got the job »; "the Bolsheviks are not as inclined to shoot people for any reason or without reason as the Germans"; "They do not separate from the Poles, but by transferring the struggle to social ground, they were able to win over a certain part of Polish society, mainly among the proletarian youth and some part of the morally broken intelligentsia." Rovetsky recognized the "complete indifference" of the Belarusians and Ukrainians to the Polish statehood, but also pointed out the hostility of many to the new authorities on economic grounds. He came to the conclusion that "broad work against the Bolsheviks is impossible," especially since, in order to "undermine the base" of the SVB, the NKVD evicted members of the families of officers, manufacturers, landowners, high-ranking officials of the former Polish state<sup>1016</sup>. As we see, even such an interested person, like Rowiecki, confirms the absence of any apparatus or anti-Polish actions of the Soviet leadership. This, in our opinion, is the fundamental difference between the about the Soviet policy in the annexed territories and the German one. Moreover, it should be noted that we are not talking fact that the Soviet policy was "better", no, it is simply different, and it is simply impossible to understand it within the framework of the European traditions of national intolerance.

Perhaps the only action directed primarily against the Poles was the events related to the fate of prisoners of war of the Polish Army. As already noted, most of the ordinary Polish soldiers who were in Soviet captivity, natives of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, were disbanded to their homes. From September 25 to October 7, 125,803 people entered the NKVD prisoner-of-war camps, which began to be created only on September 22, which led to a significant overcrowding of the camps<sup>1017</sup>. On the basis of the decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of October 3, it was decided to disband the remaining privates<sup>1018</sup>. According to the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 575118, from October 9, the departure of echelons to Baranovichi and Tarnopol began, the disbanded prisoners of war should be provided with food and sanitation<sup>1019</sup>. By October 19, 40,769 people had been sent to their place of residence. In 1939-1941 43,054 people, natives of Western Poland, were transferred to Germany, and the Germans transferred 13,575 people, natives of eastern Polish provinces, to the USSR. According to the official statement of the Soviet government dated April 14, 1990, in the spring of 1940 there were

15131 captured Polish officers and policemen were shot. At the same time, on the basis of the same decision of the Politburo, 7,305 people were shot in the prisons of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus<sup>1021</sup>. Of course,

deciding the fate of the captured Polish officers became a war crime of the Soviet leadership. However, as already noted, it was precisely such a "simple" decision that was largely predetermined by the entire course of Soviet-Polish relations in 1918–1939, including the death of about 60,000 Soviet prisoners of war in Polish camps in 1919–1921. It seems that this tragic topic in relations

between our countries should be resolved on the basis of reciprocity. Just as the current Russian leadership recognized the responsibility of the former Soviet leadership for this crime, so the Polish leadership, apparently, should recognize the guilt of the then Polish authorities for the death of Soviet prisoners of war. As Polish Foreign Minister W. Bartoszewski stated, "no one blames the entire Russian people for the murder of Polish officers. We blame only the direct perpetrators and their political mentors"<sup>1022</sup>. Probably, this position should be applied to Poland as well. In any case, an objective study of this issue and the corresponding political statement of the Polish authorities will most likely allow us to close this tragic page in our common history.

During the 20 interwar years, the position of the USSR and Poland in the international arena has changed radically. If at first Poland was the center of influence in Eastern Europe, and Soviet Russia was a country torn apart by the Civil War, then later the Soviet leadership managed to consolidate society through the creation of a powerful Soviet Russian state that could actively defend its interests on the world stage. Poland, on the other hand, was increasingly losing its influence even in Eastern Europe, and the coming to power of the "rehabilitation", mainly military-bureaucratic elite, led Polish society to a state of stagnation, did not allow solving either economic or political problems. As a result, the Polish armed forces, quite noticeable even against the pan-European background, did not have a reliable economic and domestic political base. As a result, the great-power aspirations inherent in the Polish leadership turned out to be completely unsupported. In other words, Poland simply did not have the resources to achieve the status of a great power and was not perceived by anyone in this

quality.

Instead of finding a favorable compromise and becoming a junior partner of Germany, which was quite possible, or the USSR, which was practically impossible, Warsaw decided to play big politics. If in a peaceful period such a game could still give some results, then in the conditions of the beginning of the Second World War it was doomed. As a result, in the exact words of Molotov, the "traditional policy" of unprincipled maneuvering and playing between Germany and the USSR turned out to be untenable and completely bankrupt<sup>1023</sup>. Six years later, Stalin, speaking at the signing of the Soviet-Polish treaty of friendship and cooperation, said: "The old rulers of Poland did not want to have allied relations with the Soviet Union. They preferred to pursue a policy of play between Germany and the Soviet Union. And, of course, they played it out... Poland was occupied, its independence annulled"<sup>1024</sup>. Thus ended **the second attempt** in the struggle for influence in Eastern Europe and for the status of a great power between the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Soviet Union.

# Notes

## Introduction

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## PART ONE Chaos (1917-March 1921)

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<sup>6</sup> There. pp. 43-44.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. S. 711.

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- <sup>39</sup> **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. P. 10.
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- <sup>64</sup> There. S. IZ, 114-115.



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- <sup>96</sup> DMISPO. T. 2. S. 615-616; Fiberboard. T. 2. S. 427-428.
- <sup>97</sup> DMISPO. T. 2. S. 634-636.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid. S. 637.
- <sup>99</sup> Civil war in Ukraine. T. 3: The collapse of the Belopolska intervention. The defeat of the Ukrainian nationalist counter-revolution and Wrangel's White Guard troops. March-November 1920, pp. 24-25; **Lenin V.I.** PSS. T. 51. S. 158; Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920. Previously unpublished papers and materials. Part 1. M., 1994. S. 61; Bolshevik leadership. Correspondence. pp. 118-119.
- <sup>100</sup> DMISPO. T. 2. S. 658-659; Fiberboard. T. 2. S. 480-482.
- <sup>101</sup> DMISPO. T. 2. S. 656-657, 660-663; **Olshansky P.N.** Riga world. From the history of wrestling The Soviet government for the establishment of peaceful relations with Poland (end of 1918 - March 1921). M., 1969. S. 8-51.
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**Sergeev E.N.** From the Dvina to the Vistula. Outline of the operation of the 4th Army of the Western Front in July and the first half August 1920. (Second offensive). Smolensk, 1923; **Shaposhnikov B.M.** On the Vistula. Back to history campaigns of 1920. M., 1924; **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** War with the White Poles, 1920. M., 1925;  
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<sup>103</sup> **Kuzmin N.F.** Decree. op. pp. 64-65; From the history of the civil war in the USSR. T. 3. S. 266-269;  
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<sup>104</sup> From the history of the civil war in the USSR. T. 3. S. 266-269, 272-273; Command directives fronts. T. 4. S. 142-144.  
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<sup>106</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 67-70.  
<sup>107</sup> From the history of the civil war in the USSR. T. 3. S. 253-257.  
<sup>108</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 71-81, 422-424; Civil war in Ukraine. T. 3. S. 6-9, 16-17, 18-21; Front command directives. T. 2. S. 178.  
<sup>109</sup> Civil War 1918-1921. T. 3. S. 330-332; **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. pp. 150-151.  
<sup>110</sup> Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920. Part 1. S. 65-66.  
<sup>111</sup> Civil War 1918-1921. T. 3. S. 332-336; Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920. Part 1. S. 68-69.  
<sup>112</sup> Front command directives. T. 3: April 1920 - 1922. M., 1974. S. 141-143.  
<sup>113</sup> Ibid. S. 146.  
<sup>114</sup> Civil war in Ukraine. T. 3. S. 72, 81-84, 88.90-92.101-102, 111-112, 123, 126-127; Front command directives. T. 3. S. 150.  
<sup>115</sup> **Kuzmin N.F.** Decree. op. S. 71.  
<sup>116</sup> Ukrainian SSR during the civil war (1917-1920). Kyiv. 1966, p. 233.  
<sup>117</sup> **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. pp. 19-20.  
<sup>118</sup> Ibid. pp. 154-157.  
<sup>119</sup> Civil war in Ukraine. T. 3. S. 96-97, 97-98, 101, 119, 146-147; **Mihutina I.V.** Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920 pp. 157-158.  
<sup>120</sup> DMISPO. T. 3. M., 1965. S. 39-40, 50-51, 66-68.  
<sup>121</sup> There. pp. 3-14, 46-49, 57-65.  
<sup>122</sup> Warfare. 1920. No. 10. Stb. 288-290; Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920. Ch. 1. S. 74-76.  
<sup>123</sup> Warfare. 1920. No. 13. Stb. 386.  
<sup>124</sup> From the history of the civil war in the USSR. T.Z. P. 186. It is curious to note that used in article by B.M. Shaposhnikov "The first combat steps of Marshal Pilsudski" (Military business. 1920. No. 13. Stb. 387-392) the phrase "natural Jesuitry of the Poles", opposed to an honest and open spirit Great Russian tribe, caused Trotsky's displeasure, since "this is contrary to the spirit of the brotherhood of the Russian working class to the working masses of Poland. As a result, the publication of the journal "Military Affairs" was suspended until a radical change in the composition of the editorial board, and Shaposhnikov had to give

explanations before the Revolutionary Military Tribunal (Soviet-Polish relations in political European conditions in the 1930s. M., 2001. S. 61-62).

- <sup>25</sup> Warfare. 1920. No. 11. Stb. 347.
- <sup>26</sup> Warfare. 1920. No. 13. Stb. 405-410.
- <sup>27</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 432-433.
- <sup>28</sup> Front command directives. T. 3. S. 16-17.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid. S. 28.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid. S. 24.
- <sup>31</sup> **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. S. 157.
- <sup>32</sup> Civil War 1918-1921. T. 3. S. 342-350; **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. pp. 157-161.
- <sup>33</sup> **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. S. 160.
- <sup>34</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. S. 136
- <sup>35</sup> **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. S. 156.
- <sup>36</sup> Front command directives. T. 3. S. 141.
- <sup>37</sup> **Kuzmin N.F.** Decree. op. S. 136.
- <sup>38</sup> Tamzhe. S. 137.
- <sup>39</sup> Front command directives. T. 3. S. 681-682.
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- <sup>41</sup> Ibid. pp. 158-159.
- <sup>42</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 449-450.
- <sup>43</sup> **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. pp. 161-162.
- <sup>44</sup> Military encyclopedia. T. 4. M., 1994. S. 28.
- <sup>45</sup> **Przybylsky A.** Decree. op. pp. 161-167.
- <sup>46</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 458-459.
- <sup>47</sup> **Lenin V.I.** PSS. T. 51. S. 205.
- <sup>48</sup> Front command directives. T. 3. S. 162-163.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid. S. 168.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid. pp. 173-174.
- <sup>51</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. S. 162; Front command directives. T. 3. S. 177-178.
- <sup>52</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. S. 165; Front command directives. T. 3. S. 178-185.
- <sup>53</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. S. 166; Front command directives. T. 3. S. 188, 190.
- <sup>54</sup> **Klyuev L.** Decree. op. pp. 49-51.
- <sup>55</sup> Front command directives. T. 3. S. 191-192.
- <sup>56</sup> There. pp. 57-58. 59.
- <sup>57</sup> Fiberboard. T. 2. S. 552-553; The struggle for Soviet power in Belarus 1918-1920. Collection documents and materials. Minsk. 1971. Vol. 2: February 1919 - 1920, pp. 317-318.
- <sup>58</sup> Fiberboard. T. 2. S. 565-566.
- <sup>59</sup> **Mihutina I.V.** Decree. op. pp. 157-159; **Genis V.L.** First Cavalry Army: Behind the Scenes of Glory// Questions of history. 1994. No. 12. S. 64-77.
- <sup>60</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 176-177.
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- <sup>68</sup> Civil War 1918-1921. T. 3. S. 366-367.
- <sup>69</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 197-198, 466-470; Front command directives. T. 3. S. 60, 61-62.

- <sup>70</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. pp. 470-471.
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- <sup>187</sup> **Kakurin N.E., Melikov V.A.** Decree. op. S. 209; Directives of the High Command. S. 644.
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- <sup>265</sup> Front command directives. T. 3. S. 114.
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- <sup>294</sup> **Military encyclopedia. T. 7. M., 2003. S. 557; Zalusky 3.** Paths to the reliability Tsnalet **D., Nalencz T.** Jozef Pilsudski - legends and facts. Per. from Polish. M., 1990. S. 264. According to other sources, Polish troops lost 176,814 people in 1920, of which: 34,681 were killed and died of wounds, 47,842 missing and 22,326 wounded. (**Vysh-chelsky L.** op. op. P. 256)
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120-126. Unfortunately, the state of the documentary base on this issue is such that no exact data just doesn't exist. For example, according to the reports of the operational department of the High Command From February 1919 to October 1920, at least 206,877 military personnel were taken prisoner by the Polish troops Red Army. However, in Polish literature, the figure of 110 thousand prisoners is widespread. Same we can also say about the exact number of Red Army soldiers who died in captivity, which, apparently, will remain unknown. For all these problems, see: Red Army soldiers in Polish captivity in 1919-1920. Collection documents and materials. M., 2004.

## PART TWO

### *On a collision course (March 1921-August 1939)*

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- <sup>733</sup> Formally, these departments began to be called the departments of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts in accordance with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0053 of September 26, 1939. Before that, they were considered field departments of BOVO and KOVO, although in fact they were departments of the fronts. The same order for command and control in the territories of both districts, the BVO and KVO departments were formed, which subordinated to the Military Councils of the respective fronts, see: RGVA. F. 4. Op. 15. D. 21. L. 57.
- <sup>734</sup> RGVA. F. 35084. Op. 1.D. 1. L. 43; D. 193. L. 200-202.
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- <sup>738</sup> Katyn: Prisoners of an undeclared war. Documentation. M., 1997. S. 59-63.
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- <sup>752</sup> RGVA. F. 35086. On. 1. D. 147. L. 1.
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- <sup>755</sup> There. F. 9. Op. 40. D. 62. L. 280-285.
- <sup>756</sup> There. F. 40334. On. 1. D. 278. L. 194.
- <sup>757</sup> Cit. by: **Filonenko S.I.** Voronezh-Stalingrad-Berlin. The history of the combat path of the 45th Infantry (74th Guards Nizhnedneprovskaya Order of Bogdan Khmel'nitsky II degree) division. Voronezh. 2000.

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<sup>758</sup> RGVA. F. 35084. On. 1. D. 188. L. 1-3.

<sup>759</sup> There. F. 35086. On. 1. D. 212. L. 1-2.

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<b>notes</b>
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**1**

**Conduct reconnaissance of accommodation points**

**2**

Estimated data.